ECLIPSE COMICS™

THE ILLUSTRATED SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINE FOR MATURE READERS

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№ 12

ALIEN ENCOUNTERS™

The PENUMBRA

WRITE TO: ECLIPSE COMICS - P.O. BOX 1099 - FORESTVILLE - CALIFORNIA - 95436

ON THE RACKS

SCOUT no. 18
Scout and Monday go to Las Vegas, where Scout is re-united with Missy and Guitar Man.

ALIEN ENCOUNTERS no. 12
Four science fiction tales to take you across the last horizon!

THE DREAMERY no. 3
A *new* story featuring the centaurs from issue no. 1. Plus, "Alice in Wonderland."

CAPTAIN EO 3-D
Adapting the wildly successful George Lucas/Francis Coppola/Michael Jackson/Kodak/Walt Disney Productions 3-D movie!

AXA Vol. 8
Two more complete AXA stories from the amazing British newspaper strip.

AIRBOY nos. 19 & 20
The celebrated return of an army of Airboy's most asked-for villains—"Rats!"

ZOONIVERSE no. 5
As the plot unfolds, we discover the mission was a set-up. The Patrol is on its own!

BULLET CROW,
FOWL OF FORTUNE no. 2
Continuing the classic run of this excellent strip from the pages of *The Comic Reader.*

OVERLOAD no. 1
Comics best humorists join forces to bring you this special potpourri of laughs.

TALES OF THE BEANWORLD no. 6
The Boom'rBand goes wild! A new dance craze sweeps the Beanworld!

THE NEW WAVE VS.
THE VOLUNTEERS 3-D no. 1
The New Wave's search for the missing Dot leads them smack into the Volunteers.

MR. MONSTER no. 9
Doc Stearn takes a vacation, which proves to be more stressful than expected.

WHODUNNIT? no. 3
Be the first to answer the question "Who Offed Henry Croft?" and WIN ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS!

FLOYD FARLAND,
CITIZEN OF THE FUTURE
Explore a world in which every citizen conspires against the totalitarian government—except one man!

ENCHANTER no. 1
Markisham stands up to his evil father and discovers his immortal powers. But on Mid-Earth, who will pay the price?

VILLAINS & VIGILANTES no. 3
The Crusaders launch their assault against The Crushers, who have captured the Crusaders Citadel.

CROSSFIRE no. 21
Jay Endicott learns the story of a man who lives his life decidedly out of sequence.

PORTIA PRINZ
OF THE GLAMAZONS no. 3
The Pro-Tech Conspiracy Group forms as the Technology Crisis threatens Glamazon Island's new queen, Portia Prinz.

PAPER DOLLS FROM THE COMICS
Presenting a collection of paper dolls which originally appeared in rare newspaper comic strips decades ago. Edited by Trina Robbins.

AS FORETOLD: Like i said in the last Penumbra, this time i'm gonna tell you all about our new offices. Of course, if you read **The Comics Buyer's Guide** or **Amazing Heroes,** which carry **Page Nine** and **Fit to Print,** you already know about this stuff, and maybe more than you even wanted to know, come to think of it.

Anyway, it is now early March in Real Time, and we have moved into our new, improved, unfloodable offices in Forestville, California.

Forestville is about an hour and a half drive north of San Francisco, on Highway 116, near the Russian River (but not too near). We have a little two acre remnant of one of the early farms in this area, complete with ten-room Victorian house, ancient olive, apple and fig trees, and a falling-down barn. The offices are in what used to be a big garage-workshop building. We have insulated, sheet-rocked, floored, wainscotted, carpeted, and aesthetically improved this structure 'til even its own mother would not recognize it on the street. It looks nice enough to live in, and since work is how most of us spend most of our lives, it is also good enough to work in.

The walls have been painted a light cream colour which the Pittsburgh Paint Company chooses to call "Silkspun," and the window mouldings are what they call "Light Celadon." This latter colour is known to deco-streamline-moderne collectors as "Depression Green" or "Nile Green" or "Lettuce Green."

Now, although the "Silkspun" paint is approximately the colour of an unprocessed silk-worm cocoon, the so-called "Light Celadon" is neither Celadon (a gray-green pottery glaze), depression-provoking, the colour of any known river including the Nile, nor the colour of lettuce of any variety whatsoever.

And yes, i thought that you might find that as odd as i find it. Could be wrong, though. You might be colour-blind.

To complete this little inventory of colours, i should note that both the exposed pine ceiling beams and the knotty pine wainscotting are stained to a reddish oak tone, to match the oak flooring and the multitude of antique oak desks, chairs, cupboards, art chests, and filing cabinets amongst which we toil like loggers in a stylized forest. There is one lone non-oak item, a magnificent nine foot tall and seven foot wide chestnut wood apothecary's storage cupboard. This 100 year old monster is filled with office supplies and stationery. It dominates the room in a kindly, wooden way.

So much for the **Architectural Digest** angle on our new digs. What counts is that we're here now and you ought to note our new address and phone number.

The mail comes to:
ECLIPSE COMICS
POST OFFICE BOX 1099
FORESTVILLE, CALIF. 95436

If you have to telephone us, our number is (707) 887-1521.

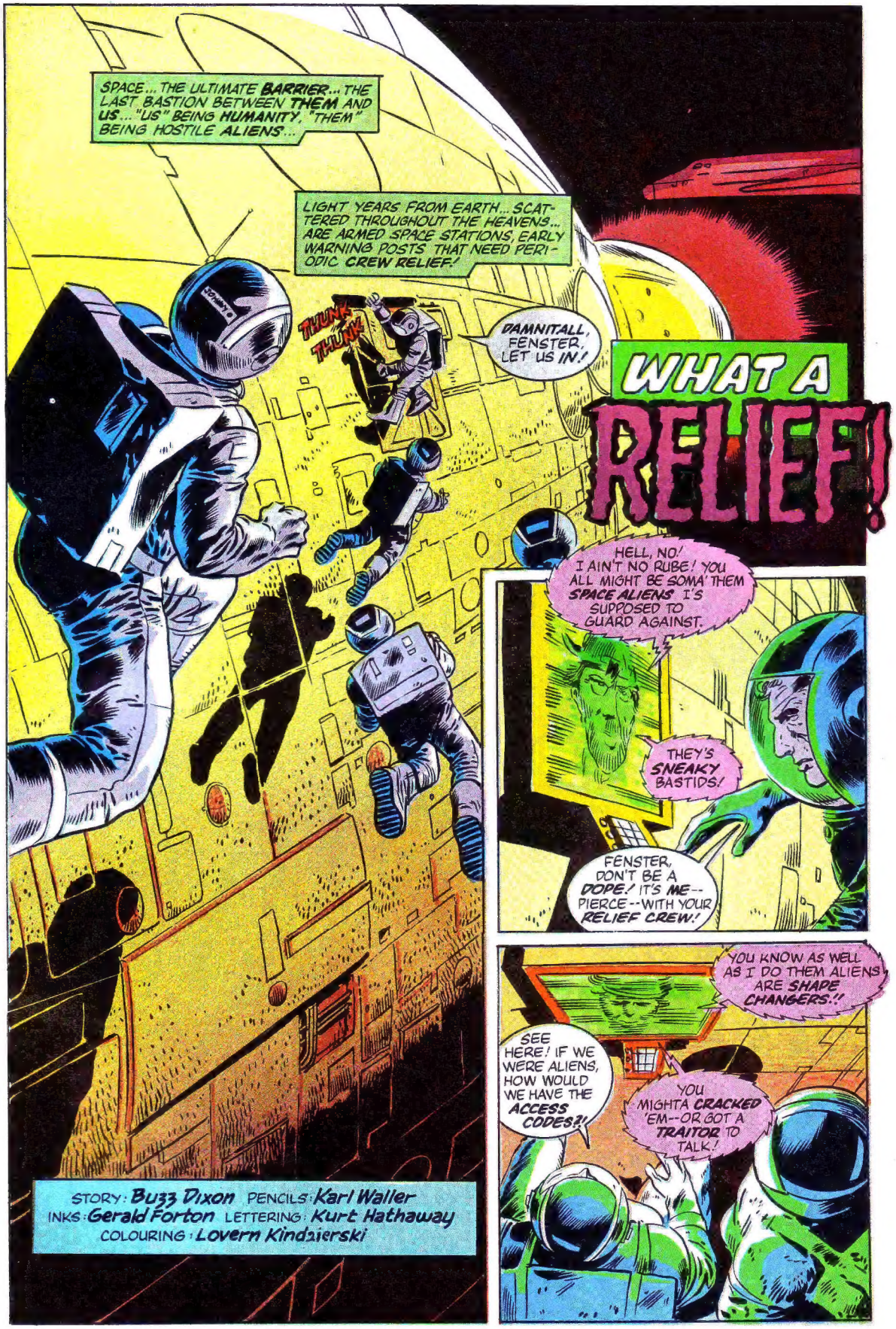
If you want to visit us in the flesh, call Traci at the phone number above and arrange to drop by in the afternoon when someone will be able to spare a few minutes to show you around the place, give you a free comic book and send you back into the world able to identify "Light Celadon" paint instantly.

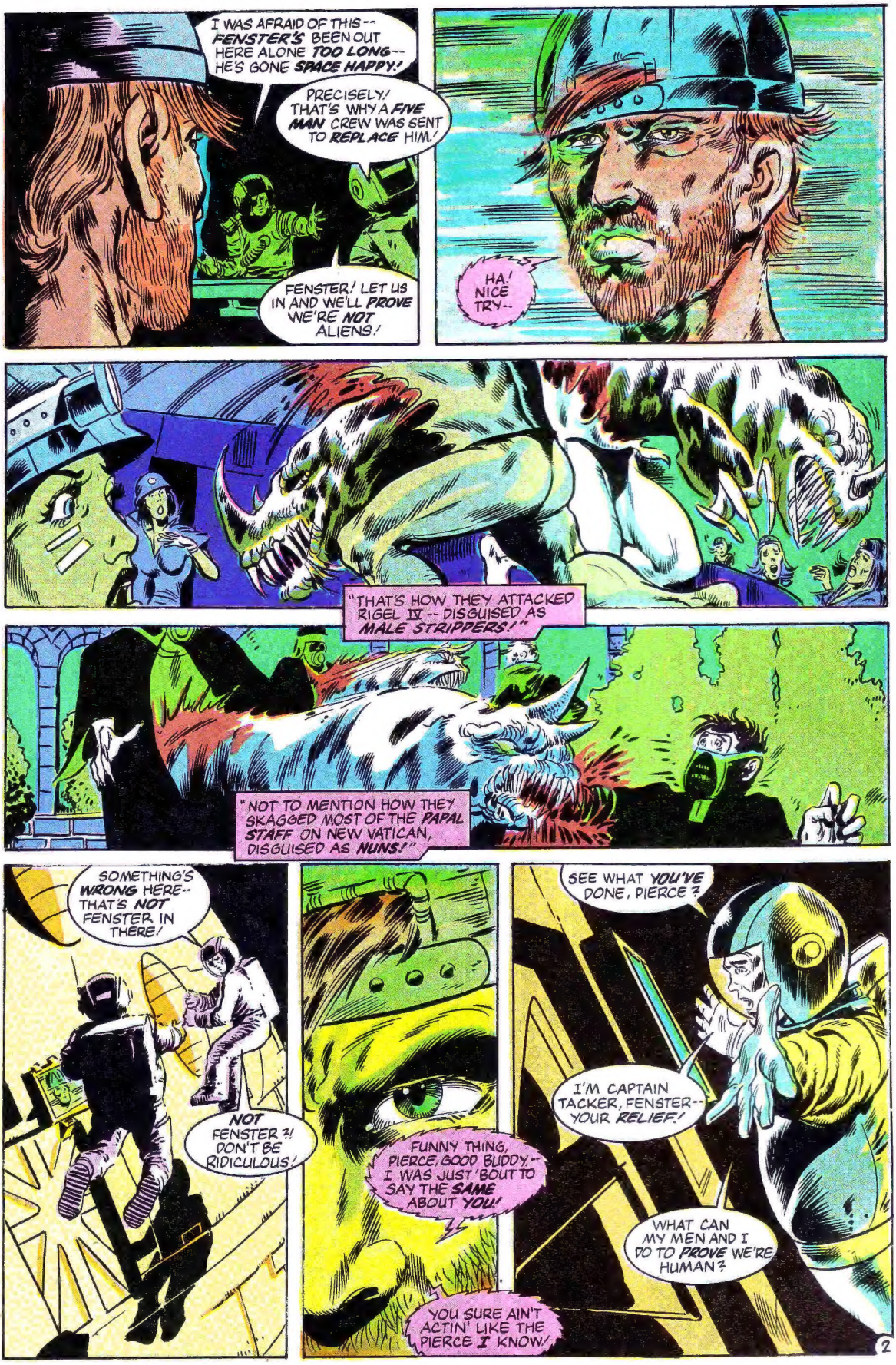
BCNU!

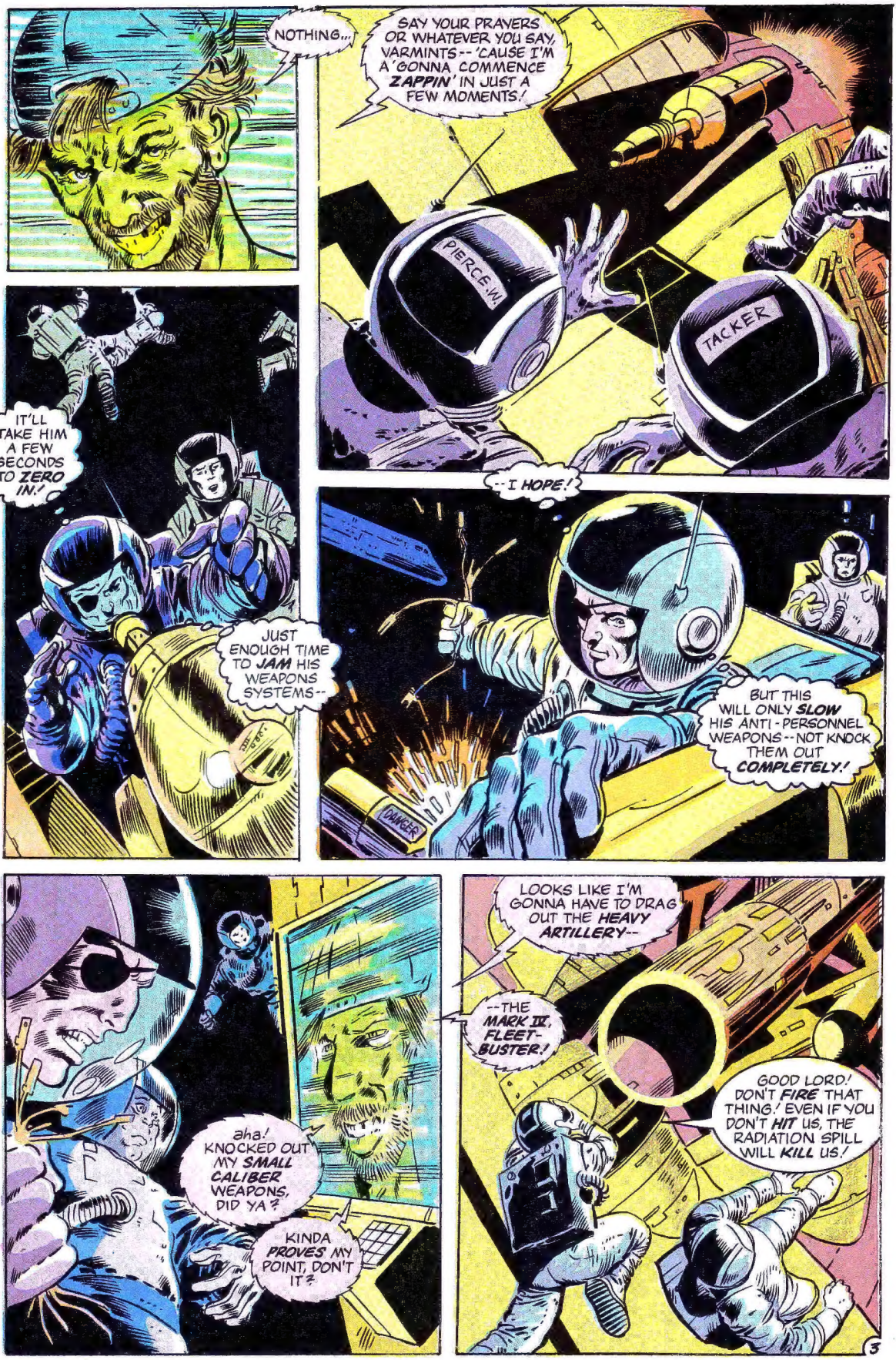
catherine yronwode

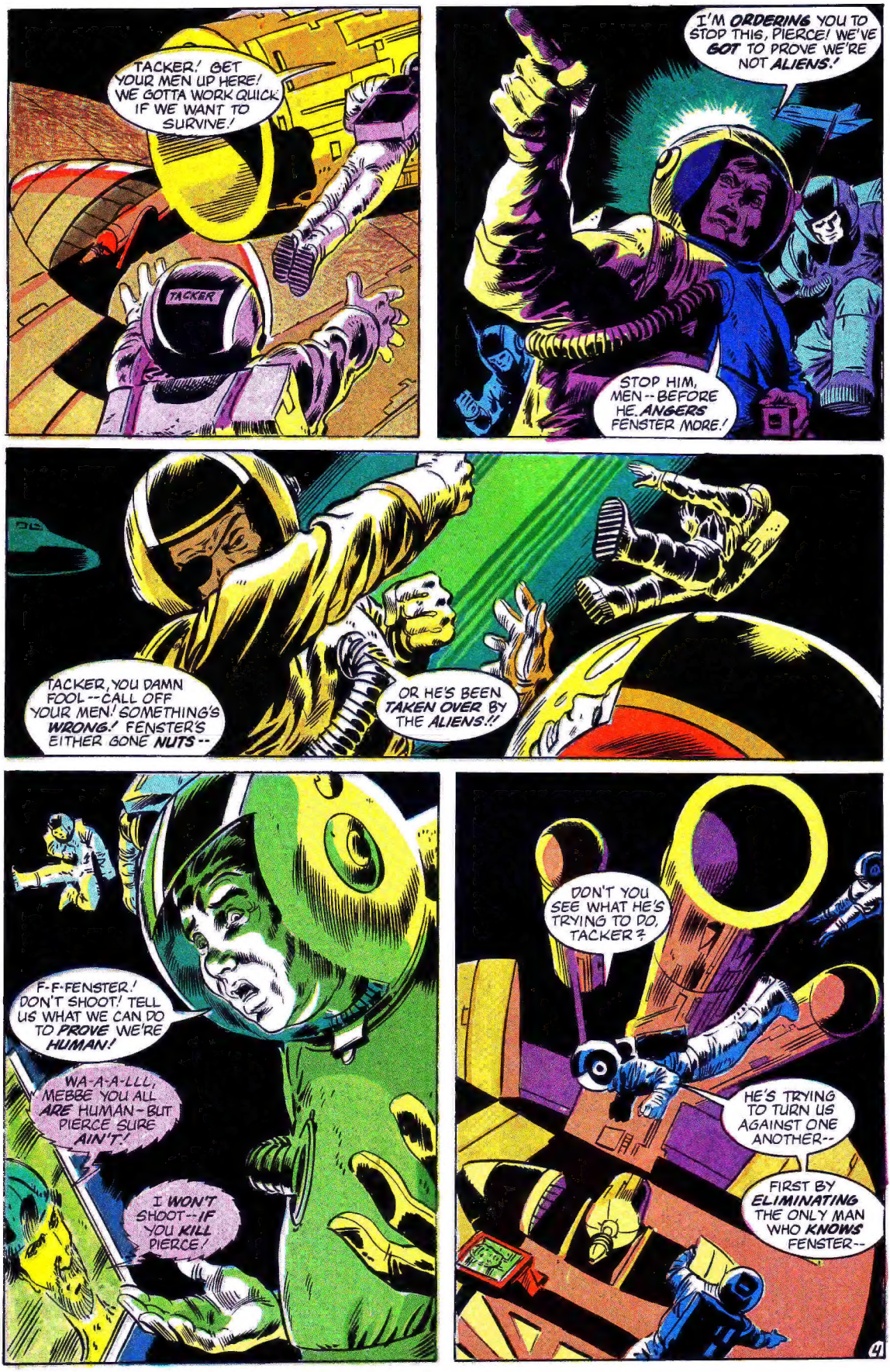
ALIEN ENCOUNTERS™ no. 12, April 1987. Published bi-monthly by Eclipse Comics, P.O. Box 1099, Forestville, CA 95436. Catherine Yronwode, Editor. Sean Deming, Associate Editor. Dean Mullaney, Publisher. Cover Art ©1987 David Dorman. What A Relief: Story ©1987 Buzz Dixon. Art ©1987 Waller/Forton. Eyes of the Sibyl: Story ©1987 Nicola Cuti. Art ©1987 Kayanan/Blyberg. Great Outdoors: Story ©1987 Ruby. Art ©1987 Doug Medved. The Face of the Enemy: Story ©1987 Nicola Cuti. Art ©1987 Mark Nelson. Alien Encounters TM Eclipse Enterprises, Inc. All other material ©1987 Eclipse Enterprises, Inc. All rights reserved. Film by SM Graphics.

A.C.S


SPACE... THE ULTIMATE BARRIER... THE LAST BASTION BETWEEN THEM AND US... "US" BEING HUMANITY, "THEM" BEING HOSTILE ALIENS...
LIGHT YEARS FROM EARTH... SCATTERED THROUGHOUT THE HEAVENS... ARE ARMED SPACE STATIONS, EARLY WARNING POSTS THAT NEED PERIODIC CREW RELIEF!
THUNK THUNK
DAMNIT ALL, FENSTER, LET US IN!
WHAT A RELIEF!
HELL, NO! I AIN'T NO RUBE! YOU ALL MIGHT BE SOMA' THEM SPACE ALIENS I'S SUPPOSED TO GUARD AGAINST.
THEY'S SNEAKY BASTIDS!
FENSTER, DON'T BE A DOPE! IT'S ME-- PIERCE--WITH YOUR RELIEF CREW!
YOU KNOW AS WELL AS I DO THEM ALIENS ARE SHAPE CHANGERS!!
SEE HERE! IF WE WERE ALIENS, HOW WOULD WE HAVE THE ACCESS CODES?!
YOU MIGHTA CRACKED 'EM--OR GOT A TRAITOR TO TALK!
STORY: Buzz Dixon PENCILS: Karl Waller
INKS: Gerald Forton LETTERING: Kurt Hathaway
COLOURING: Lovern Kindzierski


I WAS AFRAID OF THIS-- FENSTER'S BEEN OUT HERE ALONE TOO LONG-- HE'S GONE SPACE HAPPY!
PRECISELY! THAT'S WHY A FIVE MAN CREW WAS SENT TO REPLACE HIM!
FENSTER! LET US IN AND WE'LL PROVE WE'RE NOT ALIENS!
HA! NICE TRY--
"THAT'S HOW THEY ATTACKED RIGEL IV -- DISGUISED AS MALE STRIPPERS!"
"NOT TO MENTION HOW THEY SKAGGED MOST OF THE PAPAL STAFF ON NEW VATICAN, DISGUISED AS NUNS!"
SOMETHING'S WRONG HERE-- THAT'S NOT FENSTER IN THERE!
NOT FENSTER?! DON'T BE RIDICULOUS!
FUNNY THING, PIERCE, GOOD BUDDY-- I WAS JUST 'BOUT TO SAY THE SAME ABOUT YOU!
YOU SURE AIN'T ACTIN' LIKE THE PIERCE I KNOW!
SEE WHAT YOU'VE DONE, PIERCE?
I'M CAPTAIN TACKER, FENSTER-- YOUR RELIEF!
WHAT CAN MY MEN AND I DO TO PROVE WE'RE HUMAN?


NOTHING...
SAY YOUR PRAYERS OR WHATEVER YOU SAY, VARMINTS -- 'CAUSE I'M A'GONNA COMMENCE ZAPPIN' IN JUST A FEW MOMENTS!
PIERCE W.
TACKER
IT'LL TAKE HIM A FEW SECONDS TO ZERO IN!
JUST ENOUGH TIME TO JAM HIS WEAPONS SYSTEMS--
--I HOPE!
BUT THIS WILL ONLY SLOW HIS ANTI-PERSONNEL WEAPONS -- NOT KNOCK THEM OUT COMPLETELY!
DANGER
aha! KNOCKED OUT MY SMALL CALIBER WEAPONS, DID YA?
KINDA PROVES MY POINT, DON'T IT?
LOOKS LIKE I'M GONNA HAVE TO DRAG OUT THE HEAVY ARTILLERY--
--THE MARK III, FLEET-BUSTER!
GOOD LORD! DON'T FIRE THAT THING! EVEN IF YOU DON'T HIT US, THE RADIATION SPILL WILL KILL US!
3

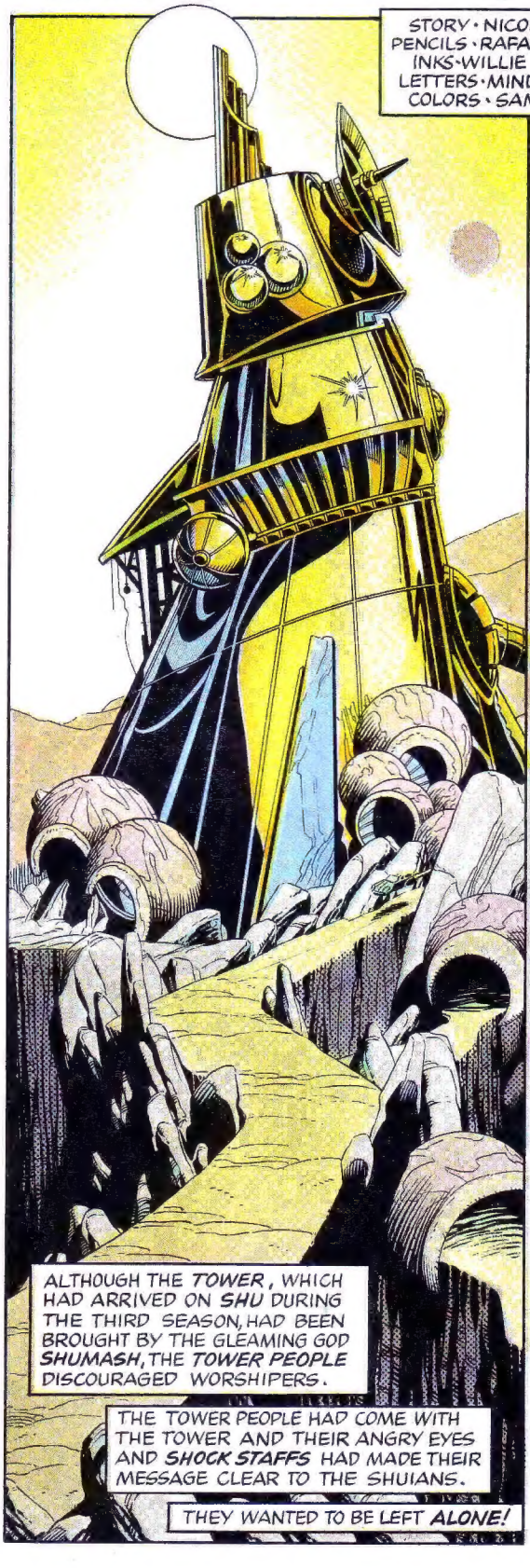

TACKER! GET YOUR MEN UP HERE! WE GOTTA WORK QUICK IF WE WANT TO SURVIVE!
TACKER
I'M ORDERING YOU TO STOP THIS, PIERCE! WE'VE GOT TO PROVE WE'RE NOT ALIENS!
STOP HIM, MEN -- BEFORE HE ANGERS FENSTER MORE!
TACKER, YOU DAMN FOOL -- CALL OFF YOUR MEN! SOMETHING'S WRONG! FENSTER'S EITHER GONE NUTS --
OR HE'S BEEN TAKEN OVER BY THE ALIENS!!
F-F-FENSTER! DON'T SHOOT! TELL US WHAT WE CAN DO TO PROVE WE'RE HUMAN!
WA-A-A-LLL, MEBBE YOU ALL ARE HUMAN - BUT PIERCE SURE AIN'T!
I WON'T SHOOT -- IF YOU KILL PIERCE!
DON'T YOU SEE WHAT HE'S TRYING TO DO, TACKER?
HE'S TRYING TO TURN US AGAINST ONE ANOTHER--
FIRST BY ELIMINATING THE ONLY MAN WHO KNOWS FENSTER--
4

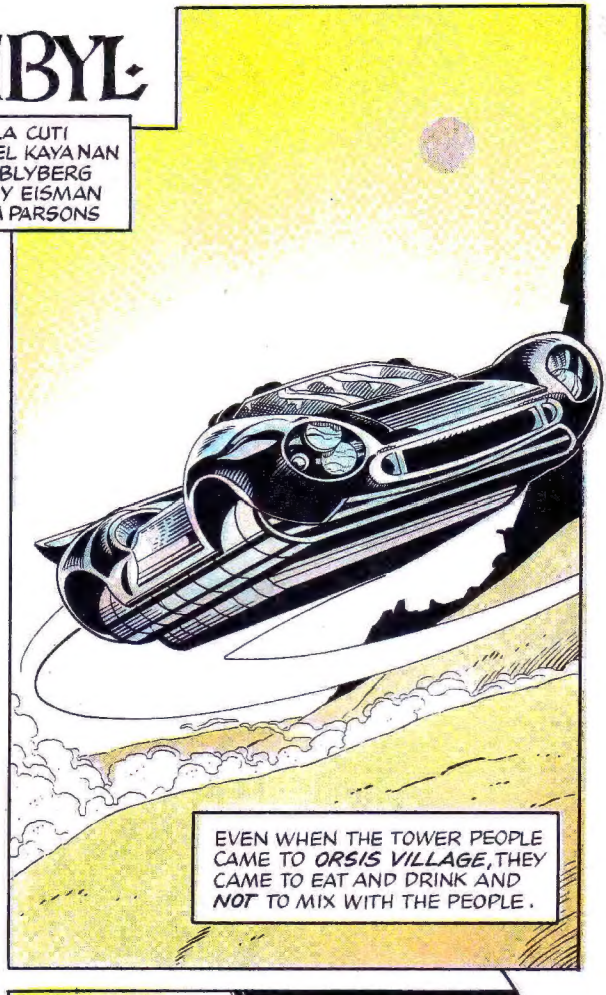
--THEN BY TURNING YOU AGAINST EACH OTHER--ONE BY ONE!
I DON'T THINK SO, PIERCE--
MAYBE FENSTER ISN'T CRAZY--MAYBE YOU ARE AN ALIEN!
YOU TAKE LONG, DANGEROUS SOLO MISSIONS, PIERCE!
HOW COULD I BE AN ALIEN, TACKER? I FLEW YOU FROM STARBASE!
WHO KNOWS WHEN YOU MAY HAVE BEEN REPLACED?
DON'T FALL PREY TO HIS WARPED LOGIC, TACKER! IT'S ONLY A--
UNGH!
GOOD SHOW! YOU GOT THE ALIEN!
THAT'S IT, JONES--RIP HIS ROCKET PACK OFF SO HE CAN'T ESCAPE!
OKAY, FENSTER! SEE? WE CAUGHT HIM! WE CAUGHT THE DIRTY LITTLE ALIEN!
NOT MUCH OF A CHANCE--ONLY HOPE I CAN REACH THE SHUTTLE--
WHOO--EE! YOU SHORE DID! GUESS I WAS WRONG ABOUT YOU GUYS! YOU DONE GOOD!
HANG ON WHILE I GET MUH SHOOTIN' IRON WORKIN'--
--WE'RE GONNA HAVE ALIEN-IN-A BASKET TONIGHT!
--BEFORE MY AIR RUNS OUT!
KA-ZAP!
5

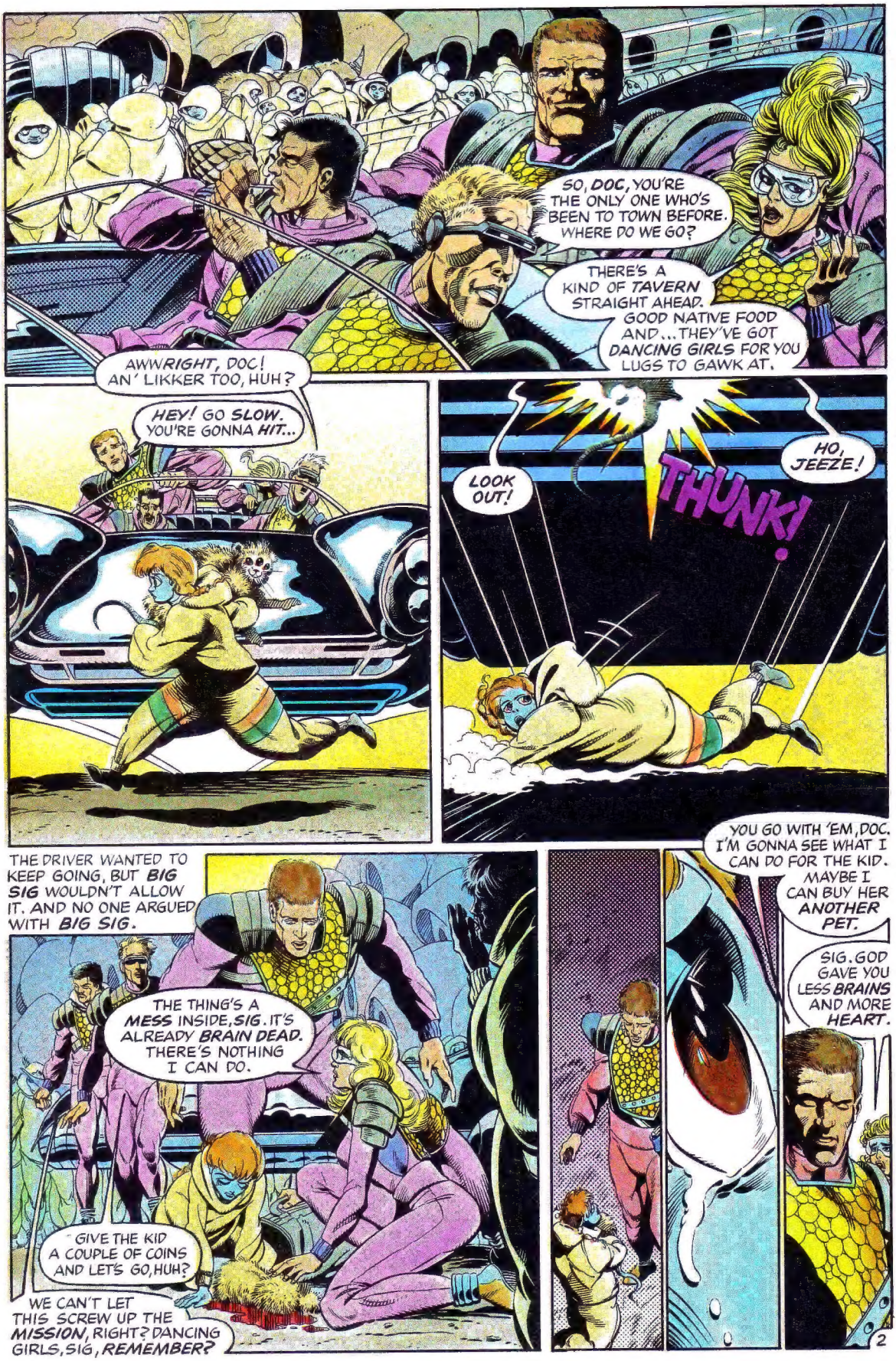
... GOTTA... GOTTA GET... INSIDE... PASSING OUT...
... SEAL THE AIRLOCK ...OPEN THE OXYGEN...
HSSS
EVADE THE FLEET-BUSTER-- AND GET BACK TO STARBASE WITH A WARNING!
WOOSH!
HE-HE GOT AWAY! BUT WE TRIED--WE REALLY DID TRY!
SHUCKS, TACKER, I REALIZE THAT-- YOU GUYS ARE HUMAN IN MY BOOK!
ONLY THREE MEN CAN USE THE AIR-LOCK AT A TIME, TACKER--SO I HOPE YOU WON'T MIND WAITING A COUPLE OF MINUTES.
NOT AT ALL--NOT AT ALL!
KER
RIPP!
SHRED
GNYARRGGHH!!
I'M OPENING THE OUTER AIRLOCK, NOW, TACKER-- I CAN'T TELL YOU ALL HOW MUCH I WAN-NA MEET YOU!
F. GORDON
GUNCH
End.

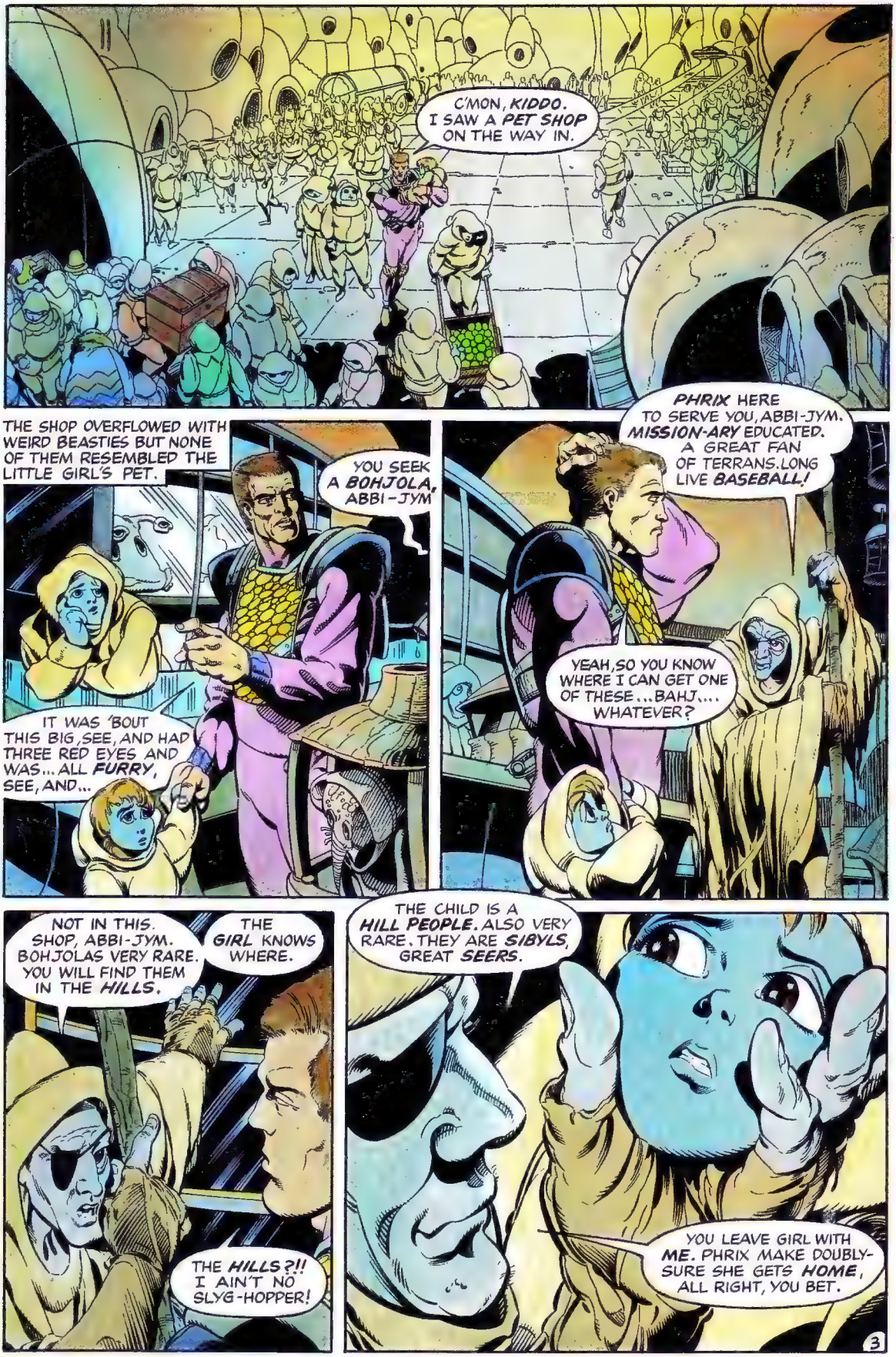
EYES OF THE SIBYL

STORY · NICOLA CUTI
PENCILS · RAFAEL KAYANAN
INKS · WILLIE BLYBERG
LETTERS · MINDY EISMAN
COLORS · SAM PARSONS

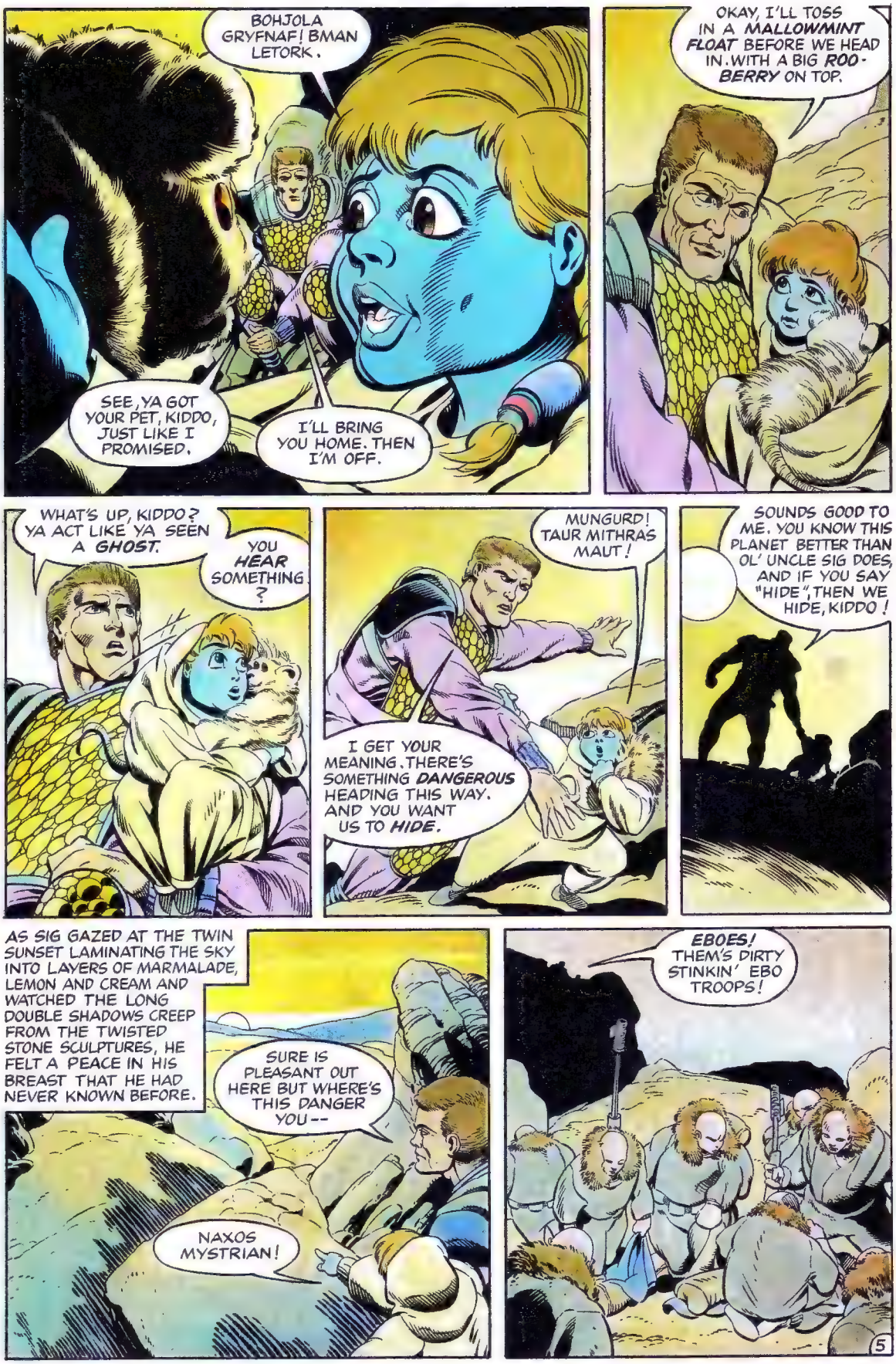

ALTHOUGH THE TOWER, WHICH HAD ARRIVED ON SHU DURING THE THIRD SEASON, HAD BEEN BROUGHT BY THE GLEAMING GOD SHUMASH, THE TOWER PEOPLE DISCOURAGED WORSHIPERS.
THE TOWER PEOPLE HAD COME WITH THE TOWER AND THEIR ANGRY EYES AND SHOCK STAFFS HAD MADE THEIR MESSAGE CLEAR TO THE SHUIANS.
THEY WANTED TO BE LEFT ALONE!

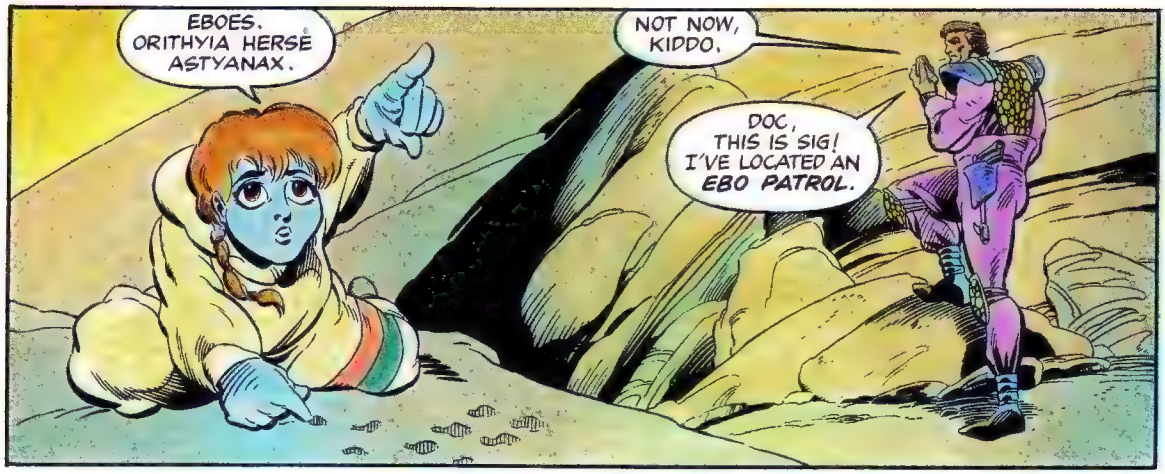



SO, DOC, YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO'S BEEN TO TOWN BEFORE. WHERE DO WE GO?
THERE'S A KIND OF TAVERN STRAIGHT AHEAD. GOOD NATIVE FOOD AND... THEY'VE GOT DANCING GIRLS FOR YOU LUGS TO GAWK AT.
AWWRIGHT, DOC! AN' LIKKER TOO, HUH?
HEY! GO SLOW. YOU'RE GONNA HIT...
LOOK OUT!
THUNK!
HO, JEEZE!
THE DRIVER WANTED TO KEEP GOING, BUT BIG SIG WOULDN'T ALLOW IT. AND NO ONE ARGUED WITH BIG SIG.
THE THING'S A MESS INSIDE, SIG. IT'S ALREADY BRAIN DEAD. THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO.
GIVE THE KID A COUPLE OF COINS AND LET'S GO, HUH?
WE CAN'T LET THIS SCREW UP THE MISSION, RIGHT? DANCING GIRLS, SIG, REMEMBER?
YOU GO WITH 'EM, DOC. I'M GONNA SEE WHAT I CAN DO FOR THE KID.
MAYBE I CAN BUY HER ANOTHER PET.
SIG. GOD GAVE YOU LESS BRAINS AND MORE HEART.


C'MON, KIDDO. I SAW A PET SHOP ON THE WAY IN.
THE SHOP OVERFLOWED WITH WEIRD BEASTIES BUT NONE OF THEM RESEMBLED THE LITTLE GIRL'S PET.
YOU SEEK A BOHJOLA, ABBI-JYM
IT WAS 'BOUT THIS BIG, SEE, AND HAD THREE RED EYES AND WAS... ALL FURRY, SEE, AND...
PHRIX HERE TO SERVE YOU, ABBI-JYM. MISSION-ARY EDUCATED. A GREAT FAN OF TERRANS. LONG LIVE BASEBALL!
YEAH, SO YOU KNOW WHERE I CAN GET ONE OF THESE... BAHJ.... WHATEVER?
NOT IN THIS SHOP, ABBI-JYM. BOHJOLAS VERY RARE. YOU WILL FIND THEM IN THE HILLS.
THE GIRL KNOWS WHERE.
THE HILLS?!! I AIN'T NO SLYG-HOPPER!
THE CHILD IS A HILL PEOPLE. ALSO VERY RARE. THEY ARE SIBYLS, GREAT SEERS.
YOU LEAVE GIRL WITH ME. PHRIX MAKE DOUBLY-SURE SHE GETS HOME, ALL RIGHT, YOU BET.
3

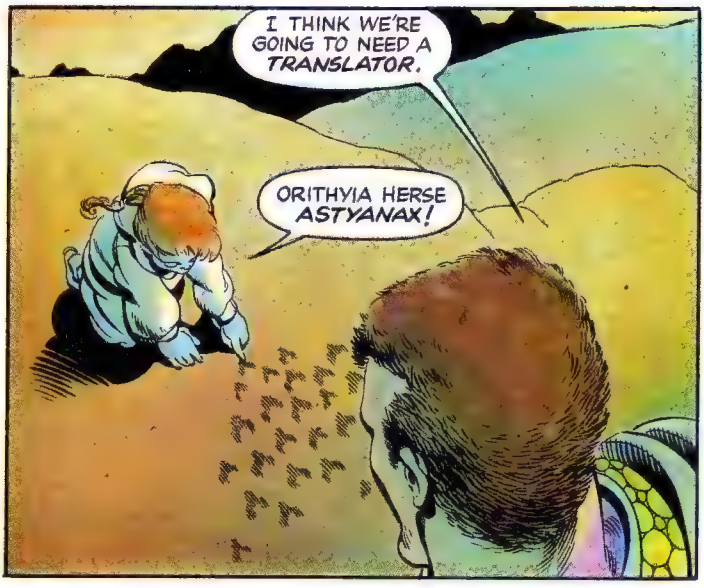
YOU LEAVE GIRL WITH ME-- LIKE HELL! WEIRDO FREAK.
JUST A FEW MORE STEPS AND WE'LL BE THERE, KIDDO. TRUST YOUR UNCLE SIG.
WHOEE! DON'T THE OLD TOWER LOOK A SIGHT FROM UP HERE. ALL GLITTERING AND SHINEY. AWFUL GRIMY INSIDE, BELIEVE ME.
BET YOUR PEOPLE ARE A-WONDERIN' WHY IT'S THERE. YOU'RE BETTER OFF NOT KNOWING. 'CAUSE IF IT EVER DID ITS JOB...
... THAT WOULD MEAN THE END OF US ALL
PIPE DOWN, KIDDO. YOU DON'T WANT TO SCARE THEM OFF.
WE'LL JUST SNEAK OVER THERE 'TIL WE SEE ONE OF THEM CRITTERS POKE HIS HEAD...
BOHJOLA! SIG! SIG!
"... UP!"
OWW!
HEY, I DIDN'T HURT IT! THE THING'S ONLY STUNNED. GO OVER AND PICK IT UP. YOU'LL SEE.

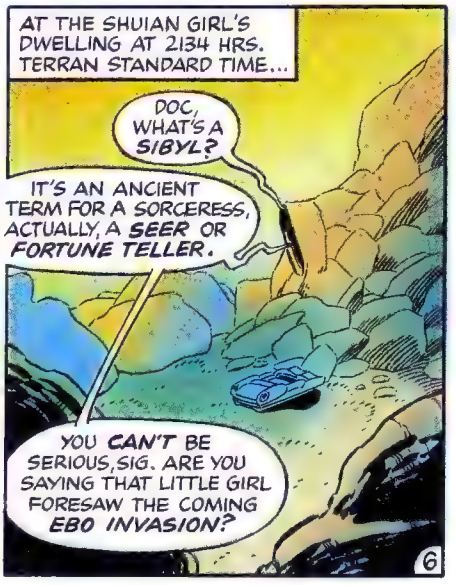

BOHJOLA GRYFNAF! BMAN LETORK.
SEE, YA GOT YOUR PET, KIDDO, JUST LIKE I PROMISED.
I'LL BRING YOU HOME. THEN I'M OFF.
OKAY, I'LL TOSS IN A MALLOWMINT FLOAT BEFORE WE HEAD IN. WITH A BIG ROO-BERRY ON TOP.
WHAT'S UP, KIDDO? YA ACT LIKE YA SEEN A GHOST.
YOU HEAR SOMETHING?
MUNGURD! TAUR MITHRAS MAUT!
I GET YOUR MEANING. THERE'S SOMETHING DANGEROUS HEADING THIS WAY. AND YOU WANT US TO HIDE.
SOUNDS GOOD TO ME. YOU KNOW THIS PLANET BETTER THAN OL' UNCLE SIG DOES, AND IF YOU SAY "HIDE", THEN WE HIDE, KIDDO!
AS SIG GAZED AT THE TWIN SUNSET LAMINATING THE SKY INTO LAYERS OF MARMALADE, LEMON AND CREAM AND WATCHED THE LONG DOUBLE SHADOWS CREEP FROM THE TWISTED STONE SCULPTURES, HE FELT A PEACE IN HIS BREAST THAT HE HAD NEVER KNOWN BEFORE.
SURE IS PLEASANT OUT HERE BUT WHERE'S THIS DANGER YOU--
NAXOS MYSTRIAN!
EBOES! THEM'S DIRTY STINKIN' EBO TROOPS!

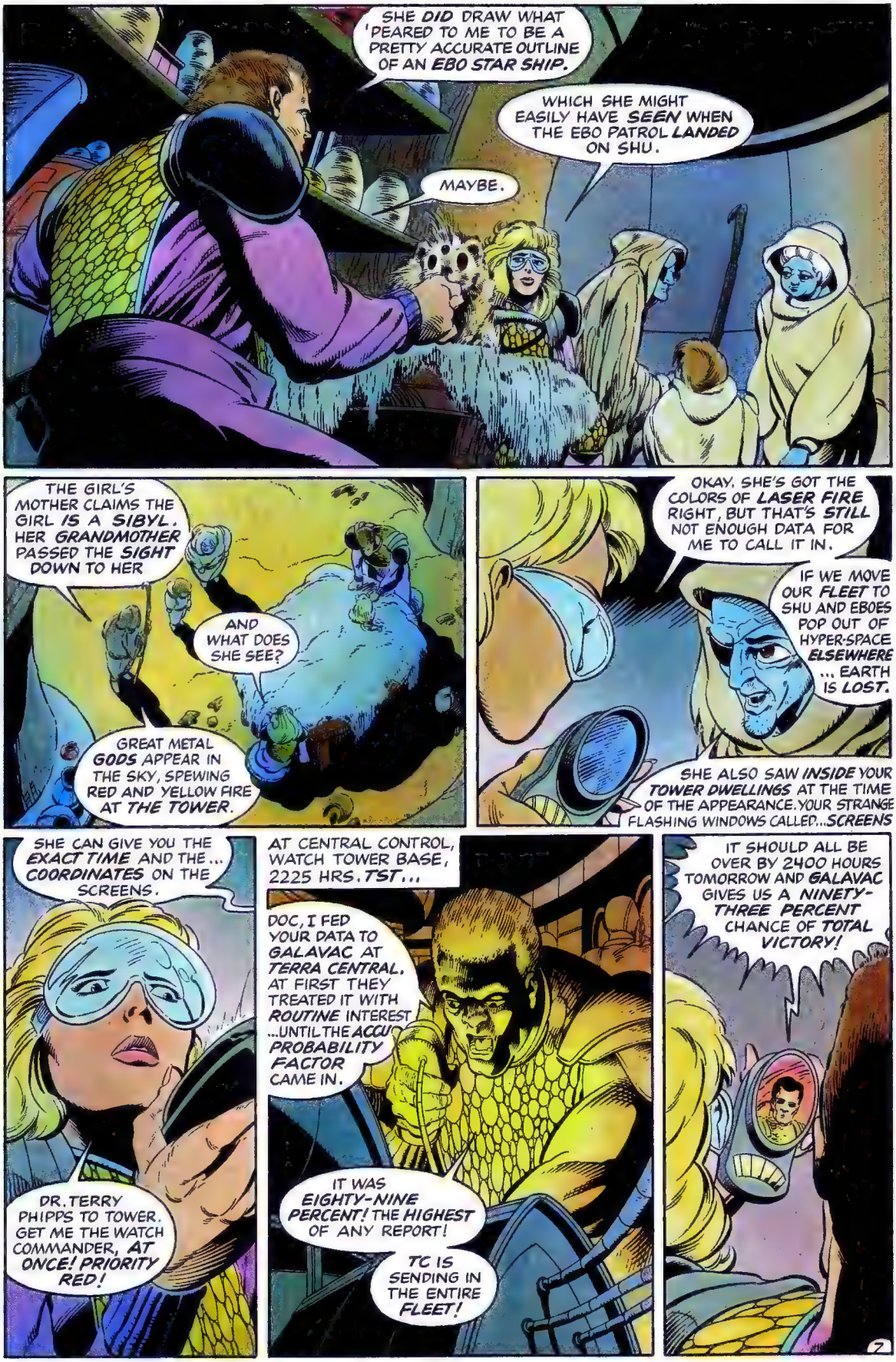

EBOES. ORITHYIA HERSE ASTYANAX.
NOT NOW, KIDDO.
DOC, THIS IS SIG! I'VE LOCATED AN EBO PATROL.

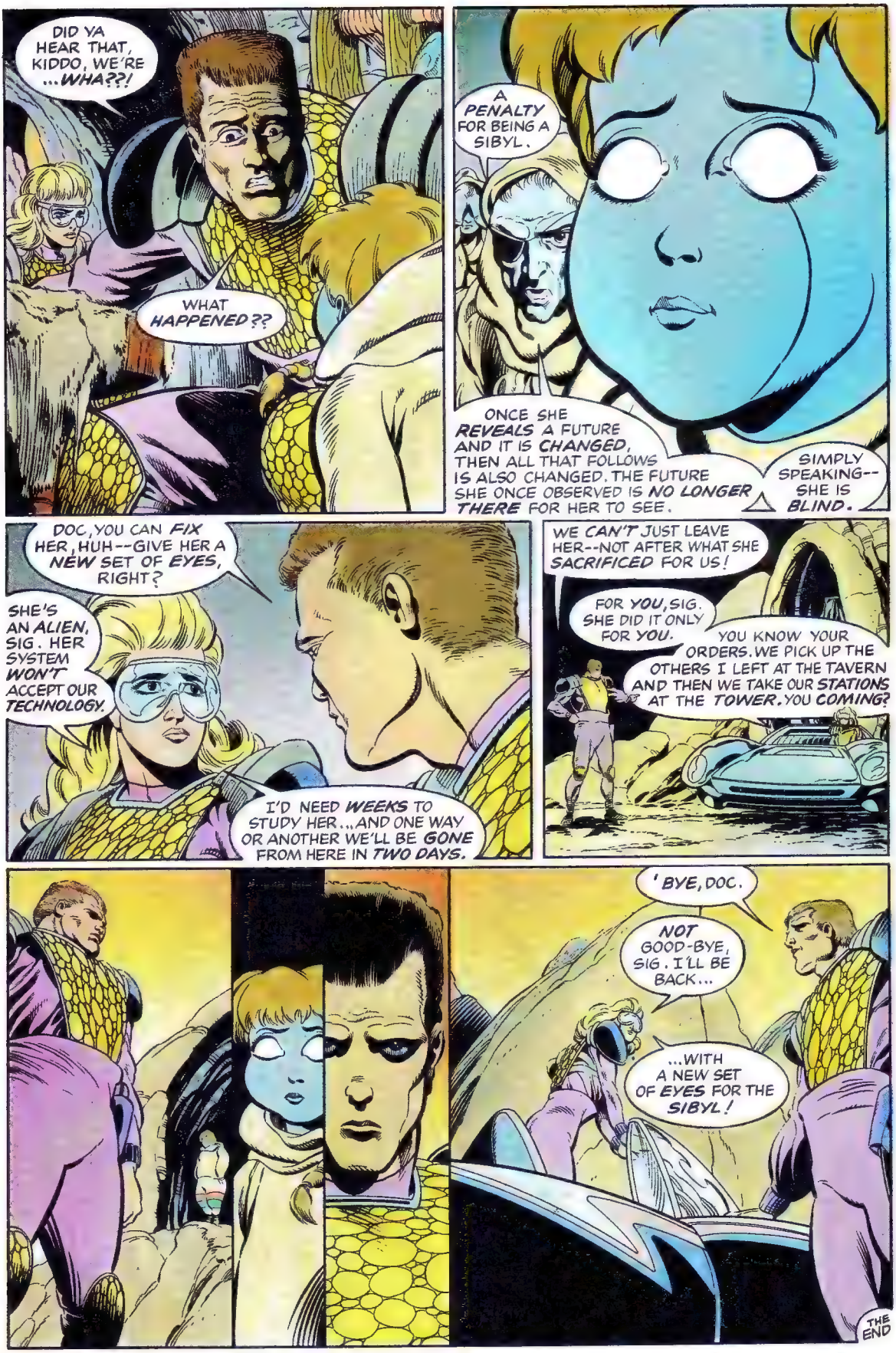
EBOES HAVE BEEN SPOTTED AT OTHER OUTPOSTS, SIG. WE SUSPECT IT'S A DIVERSION TACTIC.
IT DOESN'T MEAN THE EBO INVASION FORCES WILL EXIT HYPER-SPACE AT SHU.

JUST THE SAME, YOU'D BETTER PICK US UP, DOC.
AND SEE IF YOU CAN LOCATE A SHU BY THE NAME OF PHRIX. A LITTLE RAT-FACED GUY...

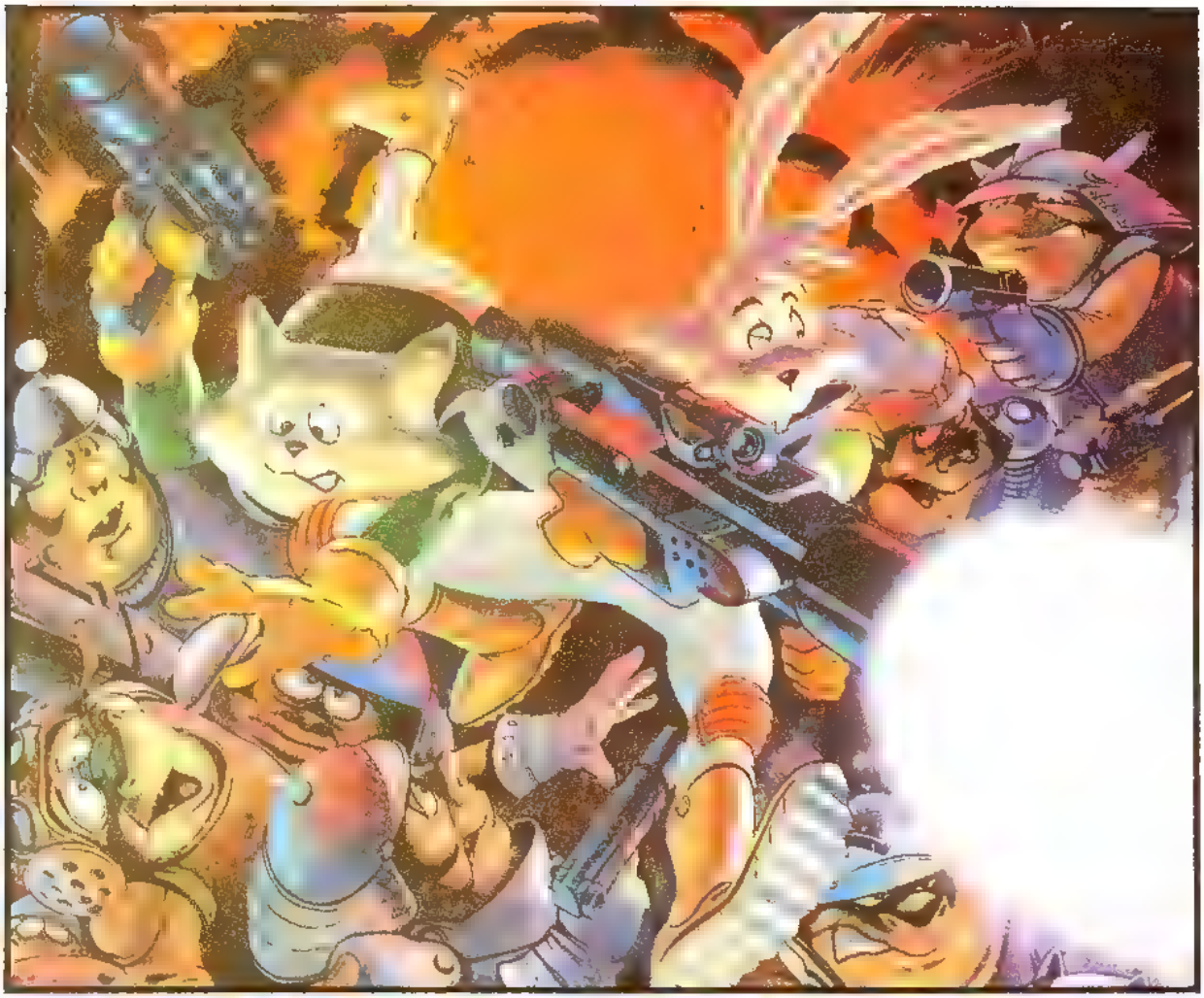

I THINK WE'RE GOING TO NEED A TRANSLATOR.
ORITHYIA HERSE ASTYANAX!


AT THE SHUIAN GIRL'S DWELLING AT 2134 HRS. TERRAN STANDARD TIME...
DOC, WHAT'S A SIBYL?
IT'S AN ANCIENT TERM FOR A SORCERESS, ACTUALLY, A SEER OR FORTUNE TELLER.
YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS, SIG. ARE YOU SAYING THAT LITTLE GIRL FORESAW THE COMING EBO INVASION?


SHE DID DRAW WHAT 'PEARED TO ME TO BE A PRETTY ACCURATE OUTLINE OF AN EBO STAR SHIP.
WHICH SHE MIGHT EASILY HAVE SEEN WHEN THE EBO PATROL LANDED ON SHU.
MAYBE.
THE GIRL'S MOTHER CLAIMS THE GIRL IS A SIBYL. HER GRANDMOTHER PASSED THE SIGHT DOWN TO HER
AND WHAT DOES SHE SEE?
GREAT METAL GODS APPEAR IN THE SKY, SPEWING RED AND YELLOW FIRE AT THE TOWER.
OKAY, SHE'S GOT THE COLORS OF LASER FIRE RIGHT, BUT THAT'S STILL NOT ENOUGH DATA FOR ME TO CALL IT IN.
IF WE MOVE OUR FLEET TO SHU AND EBOES POP OUT OF HYPER-SPACE ELSEWHERE ... EARTH IS LOST.
SHE ALSO SAW INSIDE YOUR TOWER DWELLINGS AT THE TIME OF THE APPEARANCE. YOUR STRANGE FLASHING WINDOWS CALLED...SCREENS
SHE CAN GIVE YOU THE EXACT TIME AND THE ... COORDINATES ON THE SCREENS.
DR. TERRY PHIPPS TO TOWER. GET ME THE WATCH COMMANDER, AT ONCE! PRIORITY RED!
AT CENTRAL CONTROL, WATCH TOWER BASE, 2225 HRS. TST...
DOC, I FED YOUR DATA TO GALAVAC AT TERRA CENTRAL. AT FIRST THEY TREATED IT WITH ROUTINE INTEREST ...UNTIL THE ACCU PROBABILITY FACTOR CAME IN.
IT WAS EIGHTY-NINE PERCENT! THE HIGHEST OF ANY REPORT!
TC IS SENDING IN THE ENTIRE FLEET!
IT SHOULD ALL BE OVER BY 2400 HOURS TOMORROW AND GALAVAC GIVES US A NINETY-THREE PERCENT CHANCE OF TOTAL VICTORY!
7


DID YA HEAR THAT, KIDDO, WE'RE ...WHA??!
WHAT HAPPENED??
A PENALTY FOR BEING A SIBYL.
ONCE SHE REVEALS A FUTURE AND IT IS CHANGED, THEN ALL THAT FOLLOWS IS ALSO CHANGED. THE FUTURE SHE ONCE OBSERVED IS NO LONGER THERE FOR HER TO SEE.
SIMPLY SPEAKING-- SHE IS BLIND.
DOC, YOU CAN FIX HER, HUH--GIVE HER A NEW SET OF EYES, RIGHT?
SHE'S AN ALIEN, SIG. HER SYSTEM WON'T ACCEPT OUR TECHNOLOGY.
I'D NEED WEEKS TO STUDY HER...AND ONE WAY OR ANOTHER WE'LL BE GONE FROM HERE IN TWO DAYS.
WE CAN'T JUST LEAVE HER--NOT AFTER WHAT SHE SACRIFICED FOR US!
FOR YOU, SIG. SHE DID IT ONLY FOR YOU.
YOU KNOW YOUR ORDERS. WE PICK UP THE OTHERS I LEFT AT THE TAVERN AND THEN WE TAKE OUR STATIONS AT THE TOWER. YOU COMING?
'BYE, DOC.
NOT GOOD-BYE, SIG. I'LL BE BACK...
...WITH A NEW SET OF EYES FOR THE SIBYL!
THE END

Warrants served.
Tenants evicted.
Spaceships repossessed.
Reasonable rates.



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CONTRACTORS

by Ken Macklin

A Summer Special coming in June.

ECLIPSE COMICS

SOON:

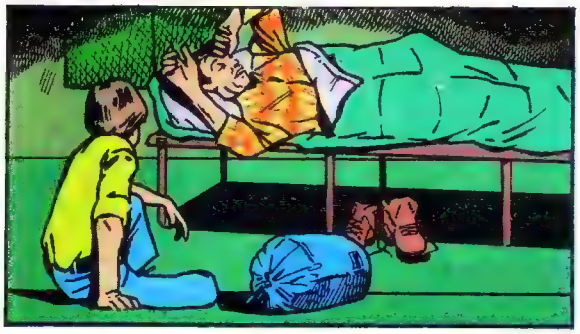
A COMPLETE
2-ISSUE
MICRO-SERIES
IN
EYE-POPPING
3-D!

SHIPPING THIS APRIL!

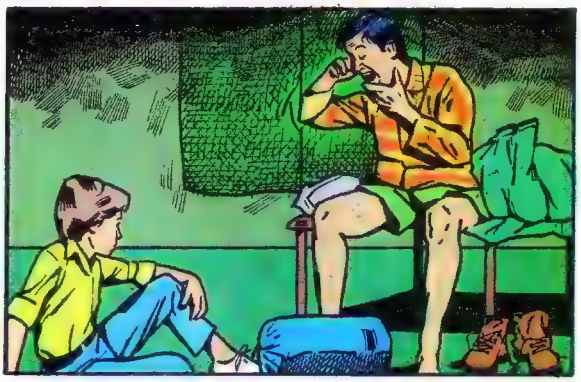
RESERVE YOUR COPY
TODAY!

FROM ECLIPSE COMICS™

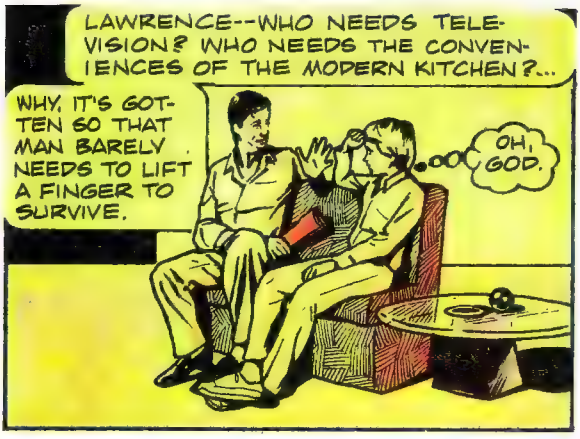
MY POP'S OKAY--A LITTLE INCOMPETENT, A LITTLE CRAZY, BUT A GOOD HEART. HE AND MY MOM ARE DIVORCED. SO I'VE STUCK WITH HIM--EVEN WHEN HE ALMOST GOT US KILLED.



SEE, IT WAS SUMMER VACATION AND WE WENT CAMPING. BUT IT REALLY STARTED BEFORE THAT--AT HIS HOUSE...



POP KEPT TELLING ME...


LAWRENCE--WHO NEEDS TELEVISION? WHO NEEDS THE CONVENIENCES OF THE MODERN KITCHEN?...
WHY, IT'S GOTTEN SO THAT MAN BARELY NEEDS TO LIFT A FINGER TO SURVIVE.
OH, GOD.

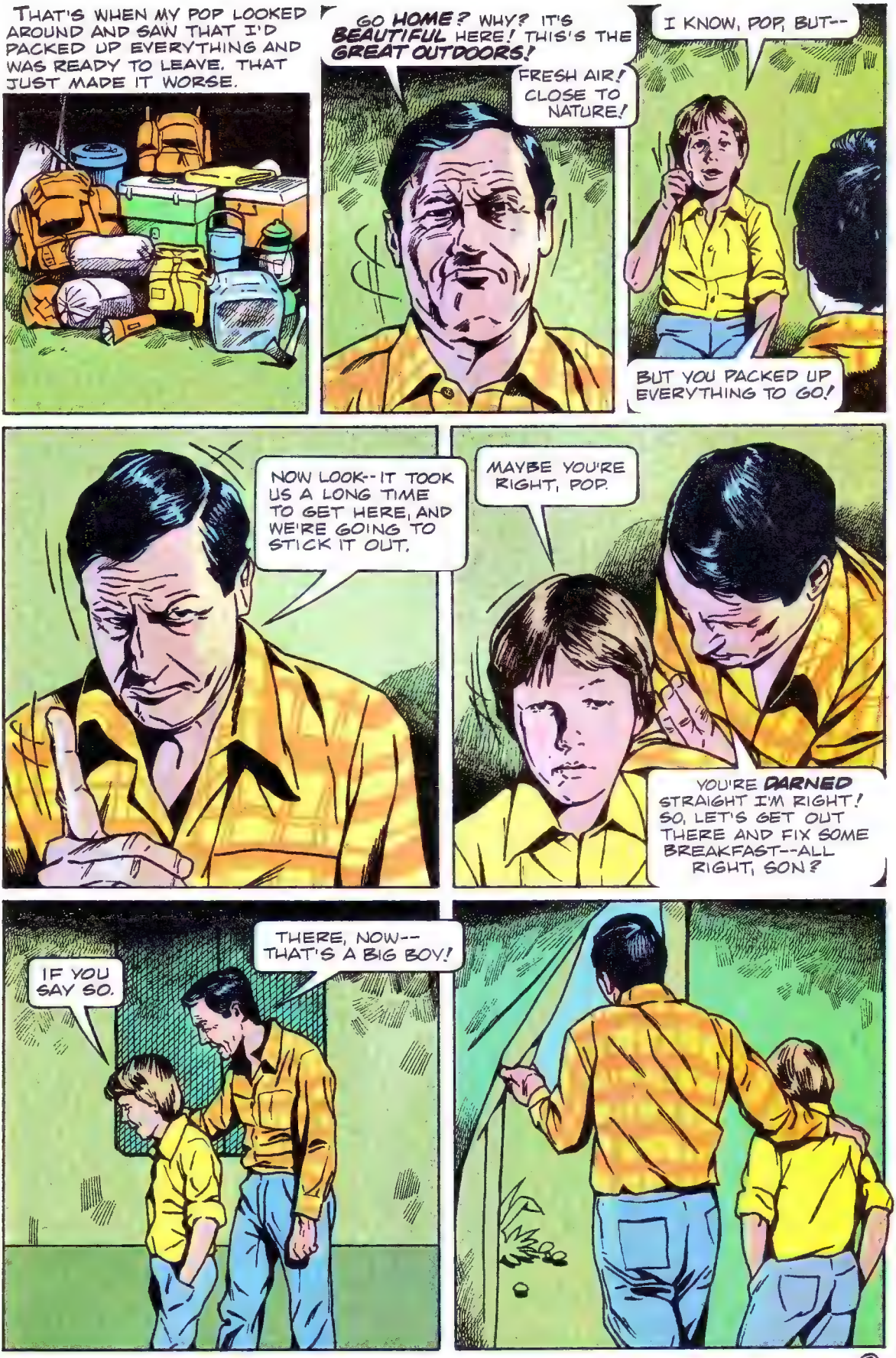
IT WAS ENOUGH TO MAKE YOU PUKE! AND THEN HE'D SAY:

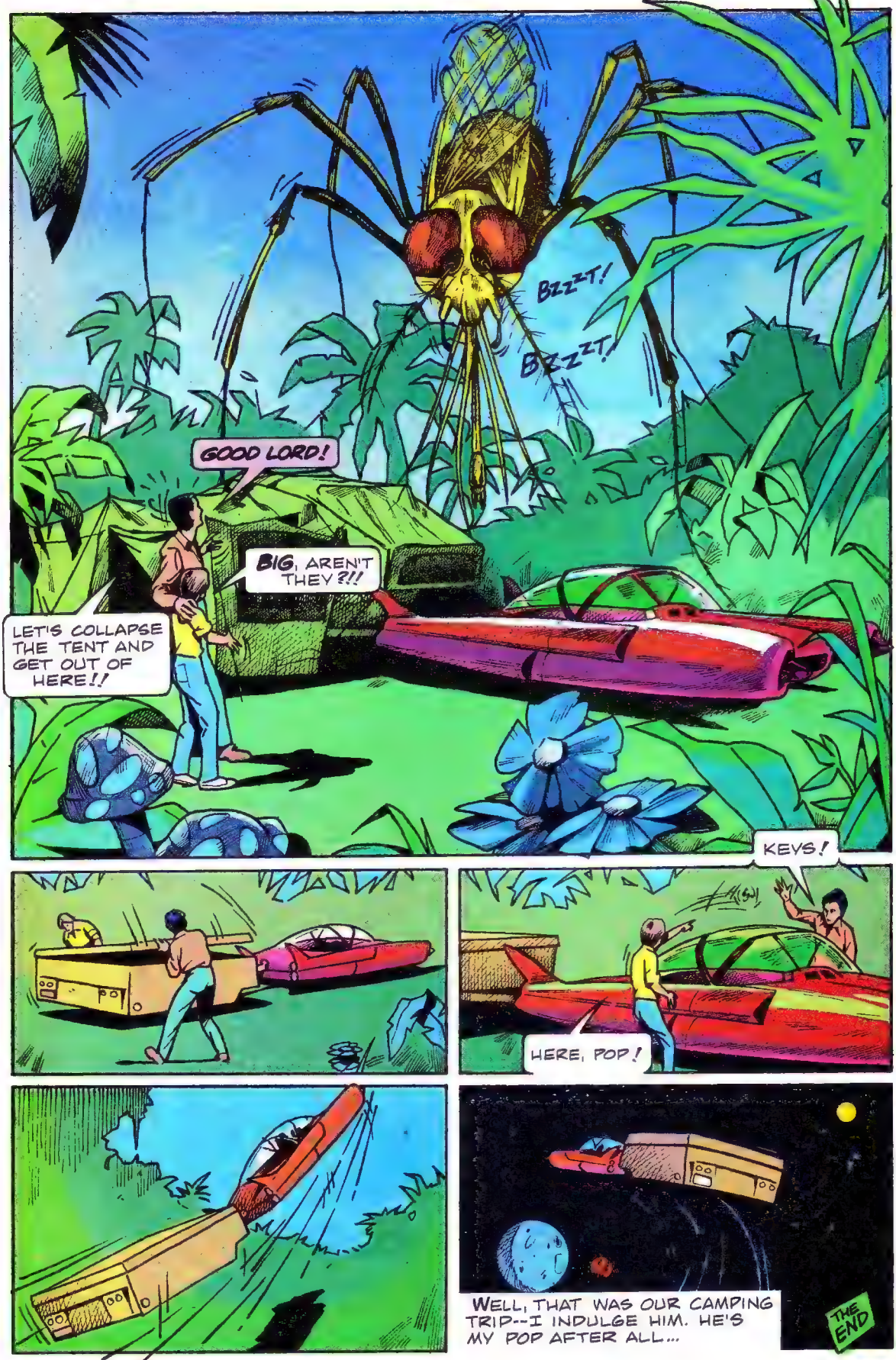
BUT POP'S ALL RIGHT. THAT'S WHY I LET HIM TAKE ME TO

The GREAT OUTDOORS

Story: Ruby
Art: Doug Medved
Lettering: Carrie Spiegle
Colors: Lovern Kindzierski

IF YOU KNEW MY POP YOU'D UNDERSTAND THIS CAMPING THING WAS SOMETHING HE HAD TO GO THROUGH--A ROMANTIC NOTION, A PHASE...
THAT'S WHY I HUMORED HIM. I MEAN, I LOVE THE GUY, SO I HAD TO GO ALONG WITH IT.
LAWRENCE, YOU'RE UP.
MORNING, POP.
GOOD MORNING!
WELL, SON, HOW DO YOU LIKE THE CAMPING LIFE?
UHH, NOT MUCH, POP.
THERE IT WAS--THE FATED QUESTION. I COULDN'T JUST TELL HIM HE WAS A SAP. I HAD TO HANDLE HIM WITH FINESSE
WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU? I THOUGHT YOU LIKED CAMPING?
GOLLY, POP-- IT'S THE MOSQUITOES!
IS THAT ALL? YOU CAN'T LET A FEW BUGS RUIN YOUR TRIP.
BUT THEY WERE BUZZING THE TENT-- ALL NIGHT! CAN'T WE JUST GO HOME?


THAT'S WHEN MY POP LOOKED AROUND AND SAW THAT I'D PACKED UP EVERYTHING AND WAS READY TO LEAVE. THAT JUST MADE IT WORSE.
GO HOME? WHY? IT'S BEAUTIFUL HERE! THIS'S THE GREAT OUTDOORS!
FRESH AIR! CLOSE TO NATURE!
I KNOW, POP, BUT--
BUT YOU PACKED UP EVERYTHING TO GO!
NOW LOOK--IT TOOK US A LONG TIME TO GET HERE, AND WE'RE GOING TO STICK IT OUT.
MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT, POP.
YOU'RE DARNED STRAIGHT I'M RIGHT! SO, LET'S GET OUT THERE AND FIX SOME BREAKFAST--ALL RIGHT, SON?
IF YOU SAY SO.
THERE, NOW--THAT'S A BIG BOY!


BZZZT!
BZZZT!
GOOD LORD!
BIG, AREN'T THEY?!!
LET'S COLLAPSE THE TENT AND GET OUT OF HERE!!
KEYS!
HERE, POP!
WELL, THAT WAS OUR CAMPING TRIP--I INDULGE HIM. HE'S MY POP AFTER ALL...
THE END

LARRY WAS **DEAD.** AT LEAST THAT'S WHAT THE DISC FROM THE ARMY TOLD HIM. THEY SAID **COLEMAN DOBBS'** SON WAS KILLED IN ACTION. IN THE CITY OF **BAGARI** IN THE **ZETA CANCRI** STAR SYSTEM. BUT DOBBS' THOUGHTS DIDN'T DWELL ON DEATH, ONLY ON LOSS.

THE LOSS OF LARRY'S FRIENDLY SLAP ON THE SHOULDER. THE LOSS OF THEIR CHESS GAMES EVERY SUNDAY. THE LOSS OF PRETTY MARIE HAUSER MOONING AT LARRY WHENEVER SHE CAME OVER TO GOSSIP WITH MRS. DOBBS. THE LOSS OF THEIR FUTURE GRANDCHILDREN.

THE FACE OF THE ENEMY!

STORY: NICOLA CUTI
ART: **MARK A. NELSON**
LETTERS: **KURT HATHAWAY**
COLOURS: **RON COURTNEY**

JIMMY, PLAY THE DISC **AGAIN.**

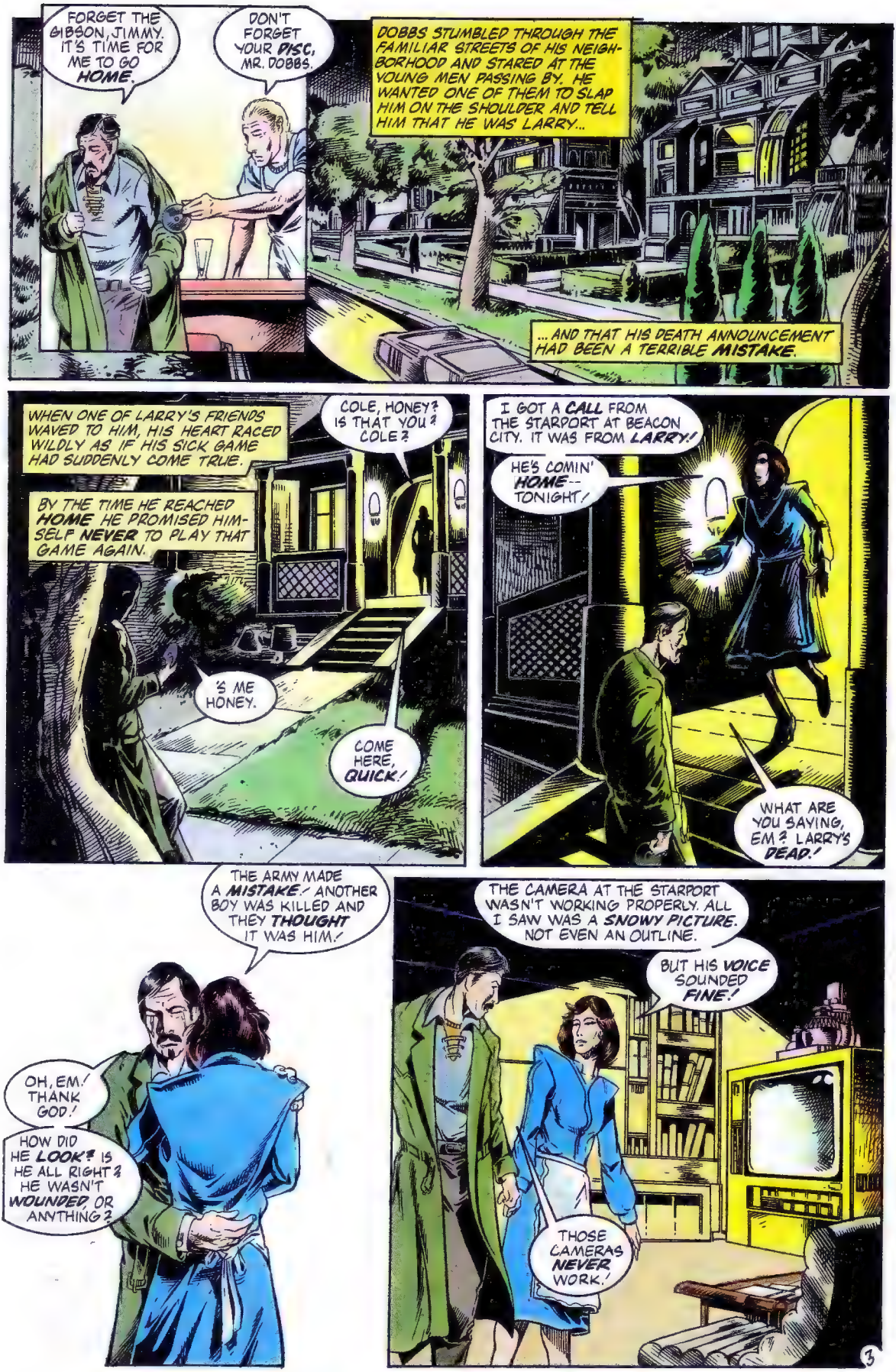
AGAIN? I'VE ALREADY... AW, HELL, SURE, MR. DOBBS.

WE REGRET TO INFORM YOU THAT YOUR SON--**LAWRENCE RICHARD DOBBS**--LOST HIS LIFE IN ACTION AGAINST THE IMPERIALISTIC FORCES OF THE ZETA CANCRI EMPIRE.

YOUR SON WAS ON A SPECIAL MISSION **BEHIND** ENEMY LINES WHEN HE WAS CAPTURED AND BRUTALLY **MURDERED** BY A CANCRIAN GUERRILLA PATROL.

COLEMAN, I'M SO SORRY TO DISTURB YOU, BUT I HAD TO TELL YOU WHAT A LOSS WE FEEL OVER LARRY'S DEATH.

WE STOPPED BY YOUR HOUSE AND EMMA SAID WE'D FIND YOU HERE. I HOPE I'M NOT INTRUDING ON YOUR THOUGHTS.
YOU GOTTA LOT OF NERVE COMIN' IN HERE LIKE THIS. YOUR KIND KILLED HIS KID, YA LOUSY--
JIMMY, DON'T! BROK'S AN OLD FRIEND OF THE FAMILY. LEAVE US ALONE. PLEASE.
Uh...SURE, MR. DOBBS. IF YOU SAY... Uh, SURE.
BRING ME A GIBSON AND A BEER FOR BROK.
I CAN ONLY STAY A SECOND, COLE. LIBZ IS WAITING IN THE CAR. SHE WOULDN'T COME IN. SHE WAS AFRAID OF THAT KIND OF REACTION.
WAIT, BROK! I DIDN'T MEAN THAT. IT WAS THE LIQUOR TALKING
SO MANY PEOPLE JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND LIKE YOU DO. I MEAN, WE WERE BORN HERE ON EARTH.
WE'RE AS HUMAN AS ANYONE.
HUMAN? HUMANS DON'T SLAUGHTER A HELPLESS ENEMY SOLDIER LIKE YOUR PEOPLE--
BROK... I'M SORRY...
2

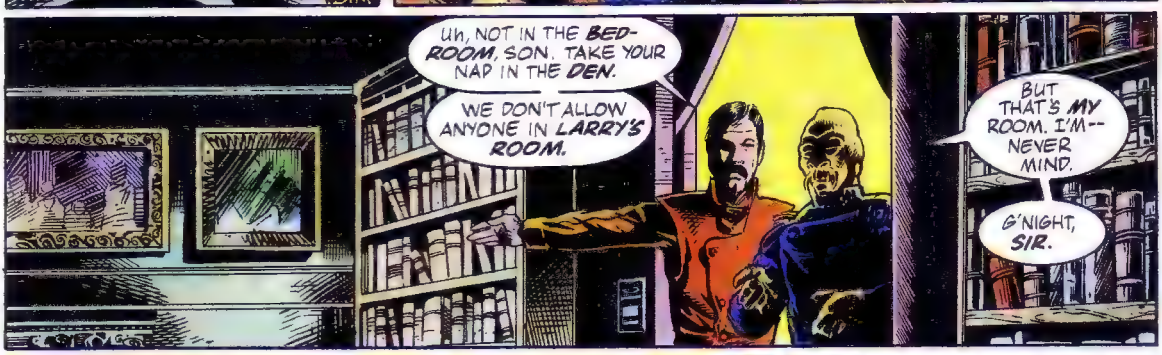

FORGET THE GIBSON, JIMMY. IT'S TIME FOR ME TO GO HOME.
DON'T FORGET YOUR DISC, MR. DOBBS.
DOBBS STUMBLED THROUGH THE FAMILIAR STREETS OF HIS NEIGHBORHOOD AND STARED AT THE YOUNG MEN PASSING BY. HE WANTED ONE OF THEM TO SLAP HIM ON THE SHOULDER AND TELL HIM THAT HE WAS LARRY...
... AND THAT HIS DEATH ANNOUNCEMENT HAD BEEN A TERRIBLE MISTAKE.
WHEN ONE OF LARRY'S FRIENDS WAVED TO HIM, HIS HEART RACED WILDLY AS IF HIS SICK GAME HAD SUDDENLY COME TRUE.
COLE, HONEY? IS THAT YOU? COLE?
BY THE TIME HE REACHED HOME HE PROMISED HIMSELF NEVER TO PLAY THAT GAME AGAIN.
'S ME HONEY.
COME HERE, QUICK!
I GOT A CALL FROM THE STARPORT AT BEACON CITY. IT WAS FROM LARRY!
HE'S COMIN' HOME-- TONIGHT!
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING, EM? LARRY'S DEAD!
THE ARMY MADE A MISTAKE! ANOTHER BOY WAS KILLED AND THEY THOUGHT IT WAS HIM!
OH, EM! THANK GOD!
HOW DID HE LOOK? IS HE ALL RIGHT? HE WASN'T WOUNDED OR ANYTHING?
THE CAMERA AT THE STARPORT WASN'T WORKING PROPERLY. ALL I SAW WAS A SNOWY PICTURE. NOT EVEN AN OUTLINE.
BUT HIS VOICE SOUNDED FINE!
THOSE CAMERAS NEVER WORK!

EMMA HAD THE LARGEST, LEANEST ROAST EXPRESSED TO HER FROM THE BUTCHER AND SHE MICROWAVED IT TO JUICY PERFECTION WHILE HER HUSBAND SHOWERED.
I'LL BET HE HASN'T HAD ONE OF THESE SINCE HE LEFT FOR ZETA CANCRI. AT LEAST NOT THE WAY I MAKE THÉM... ULTRA DRY.
NOW, COLE, DON'T YOU DARE GO GET HIM DRUNK.
WE HAVE A LOT OF TALKING TO DO.
DING DONG
IT'S HIM! HE'S HERE! I WAS HOPING MARIE WOULD BE HERE TOO.
LET ME GET IT, EM. I'M A BIT CALMER THAN YOU.
NOW, EXPECT SOME CHANGE IN THE BOY. WAR DOES THAT TO PEOPLE. HE WON'T BE THE SAME AS WHEN HE LEFT.
HELLO, SOOO-- WHAT THE DEVIL?
WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?!
IT'S ME, DAD. LARRY.
I KNOW WHAT A SHOCK THIS IS, BUT BEFORE YOU SAY OR DO ANYTHING, GIVE ME THE CHANCE TO COME IN AND EXPLAIN.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOUR GAME IS, BOY, BUT NO SWAMP-MUCKING ZET IS GOING TO SET FOOT IN MY HOUSE!
COLE, PLEASE! I DON'T UNDERSTAND THIS EITHER, BUT FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE, LET HIM SAY WHAT HE CAME TO SAY.
ALL RIGHT...IF EMMA SAYS SO...YOU CAN COME IN.

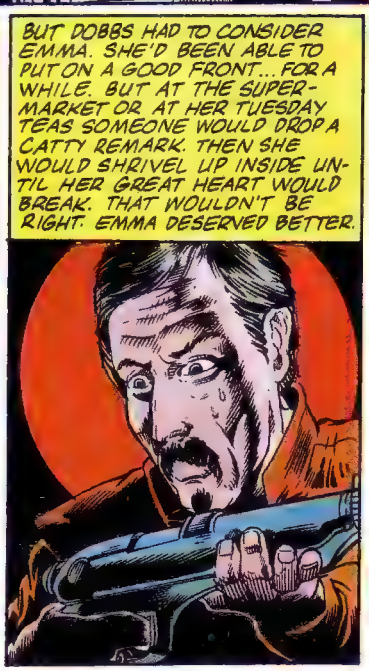
WON'T YOU SIT DOWN?
THANKS, MOM.
PLEASE DON'T CALL ME "MOM"! YOU'RE NOT... YOU CAN'T BE LARRY! I JUST WANT TO KNOW WHO YOU ARE AND WHY YOU'RE HERE.
WELL, DAD TOLD ME NOT TO VOLUNTEER FOR THE ARMY, SO I'VE NO ONE TO BLAME BUT MYSELF. MO--uh, MA'M.
BUT... WELL JUST HEAR ME OUT, OKAY?
YOU SEE, THIS SKIN IS ARTIFICIAL. IT'S A KIND OF BIONIC PLASTIC... VERY LIFE-LIKE. THE ARMY DID THIS TO ME SO I COULD SPY ON THE CANCRIS AND LEARN ABOUT A NEW STRATEGY THEY WERE PLANNING TO SPRING ON US.
YOU DO BELIEVE ME, DON'T YOU?
SO WHY DIDN'T YOU TAKE IT OFF BEFORE YOU CAME HOME? HALLOW-E'EN ISN'T FOR TWO MORE MONTHS.
I'VE TRIED, I REALLY HAVE... BUT I CAN'T.
"I LIVED WITH THE CANCRIS FOR OVER A YEAR--SLEEPING IN THEIR HUTS, EATING THEIR FOOD, WADING THROUGH THOSE MURKY STREAMS, AND SPYING ON THEM."

"MAYBE IT WAS THE RELENTLESS HEAT OR THE BACTERIA OR THE FOOD, BUT WHATEVER IT WAS, IT CAUSED THIS BIO-SKIN TO..."
"--FUSE WITH MY OWN SKIN."
AND ALL THE UNITED EARTH'S TECHNOLOGY AND ALL THE UNITED EARTH'S MEN, COULDN'T TAKE LARRY APART AGAIN.
THE ROAST IS READY. WE CAN TALK SOME MORE AT THE DINNER TABLE. I MADE IT JUST FOR YOU... LARRY.
SAY, I HOPE YOU'RE GOING TO TAKE THIS WELL, BUT SINCE LIVING IN THE SWAMP I CAN'T EAT ORDINARY EARTH FOOD ANYMORE.
OH, NO!
OOF
I'LL TAKE MY FOOD AND EAT IT IN THE DEN. ALONE.
YOU SEE, I HAVE TO SPRINKLE THIS... STUFF ON IT OR I WON'T BE ABLE TO DIGEST IT.
"STUFF"? WHAT IS IT?

FORGIVE ME. YOU WEREN'T SUPPOSED TO SEE MY MEAL WORMS.
Oh... Oh... OH!
YOU'VE HAD A LONG TRIP, SON, AND QUITE A FEW EMOTIONALLY DRAINING TRIALS. WHY DON'T YOU TAKE A NAP? YOU'LL FEEL BETTER AFTERWARDS. AND I'LL TALK TO YOUR... MOTHER, GET HER CALMED DOWN.
WE'LL EAT LATER.
SOUNDS LIKE A GOOD IDEA... DAD.
Oh.


Uh, NOT IN THE BEDROOM, SON. TAKE YOUR NAP IN THE DEN.
WE DON'T ALLOW ANYONE IN LARRY'S ROOM.
BUT THAT'S MY ROOM. I'M-- NEVER MIND.
G'NIGHT, SIR.

DOBBS WASN'T THINKING ONLY OF HIMSELF. IF IT WAS JUST HIM, WHY HE AND LARRY COULD GO OFF TO THAT ISLAND THE TWO OF THEM HAD TALKED ABOUT BUYING TOGETHER. AND THEY COULD FISH AND HUNT UNTIL THEY DIED... OR THE CREEKS RAN DRY.


BUT DOBBS HAD TO CONSIDER EMMA. SHE'D BEEN ABLE TO PUT ON A GOOD FRONT... FOR A WHILE. BUT AT THE SUPERMARKET OR AT HER TUESDAY TEAS SOMEONE WOULD DROP A CATTY REMARK. THEN SHE WOULD SHRIVEL UP INSIDE UNTIL HER GREAT HEART WOULD BREAK. THAT WOULDN'T BE RIGHT. EMMA DESERVED BETTER.

AND THERE WAS SENSITIVE LITTLE MARIE. OUT OF A MISGUIDED FEELING OF LOYALTY SHE MIGHT AGREE TO GO THROUGH WITH THEIR WEDDING PLANS. NO, HE COULN'T ALLOW IT.
HEY! WHERE'S EVERYBODY?

DON'T TELL ME NOBODY'S HERE TO GREET THE RETURNING TROOPS!
LARRY?
LARRY!!
THERE YOU ARE!
WHY DO YOU LOOK SURPRISED, DAD? DIDN'T MOM TELL YOU ABOUT MY CALL FROM THE STARPORT?
WHO? WHO IS HE? WHAT IS HAPPENING?
OH, JEEZ! I WAS HOPING I'D GET HOME BEFORE HE COULD ARRIVE. THERE WAS NO WAY TO STOP HIM ONCE THE GOVERNMENT LIFTED THE TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS.
YOU SEE, THE WAR ON ZETA CANCRI IS OVER.
THERE'S AN OLD CANCRI CUSTOM WHERE AFTER A WAR HAS ENDED THE TWO TRIBES EXCHANGE SURVIVING WARRIORS TO MAKE UP FOR THE OTHER TRIBE'S LOSSES.
THE FAMILY WHO LOST A SON GETS A REPLACEMENT TO EASE THEIR GRIEF AND AT LEAST THE OTHER FAMILY KNOWS THEIR SON IS STILL ALIVE.
WHEN THE REPORT OF MY DEATH CAME IN, HIS GOVERNMENT FED HIM DATA ON ME AND, AS TRIBAL LAW DICTATES, HE BECAME ME.
HE'D ALREADY TAKEN OFF BY THE TIME I CAME OUT OF THE JUNGLE.
WHY WE EVER WENT TO WAR WITH SUCH COMPASSIONATE PEOPLE I'LL NEVER FIGURE...
UMMM.' IS THAT MOM'S ROAST I SMELL?
YOU JUST SAVE SOME FOR THAT YOUNG CANCRI IN THE DEN. I HAVE A FEELING HE'S GOING TO BE HUNGRY WHEN HE WAKES UP.
AND HE'S EARNED HIMSELF A THICK SLICE OF THE ROAST...SMOTHERED IN MEAL WORMS.
END
8

Dear Cat,

Happy New Year! Alien Encounters 10 was as good a way as any to finish 1986, although the somewhat eerie nature of the contents made it more appropriate to Halloween. Each of the stories left me feeling a little uneasy inside. I don't know if you deliberately planned to have 4 even more off-the-wall-than-usual stories together, but the effects are no good for the constitution.

The highlight, of course, was Ray Bradbury's "The Exiles," not something I'd read before, and a truly haunting tale. The idea of burning books is not new, unfortunately, but the gruesome way this affected their creators was chilling. The best thing is that at the end we are allowed a note of optimism in that the writers might have gone on to another planet as the last copies of their works were destroyed. There again, they might have been destroyed along with them. Despite the unlikely situation we were presented with, I was still made to feel sad at this last possibility.

I really didn't understand what was going on in "Cracked Mirrors," for instance, where did the mirror come from? But I also appreciate that this was probably the intention. "Perfect Model" was a window into adolescent fantasy, confusing in the way reality and fantasy were mixed not only in Grant's mind but also presumably in Eddie's, and therefore in ours. Was Grant simply finding a way to escape from his over-powering fantasy world when he dispatched the model at the end of the story, whilst giving himself the courage to try it in real life, or were the models coming to life meant to be, in fact, reality, within the world Beppe had created? Certainly, Grant's adventures fulfilled the dream of a multitude of young men.

The beautiful art of "Arena" was, fortunately, complemented by an interesting story, which otherwise could have detracted from the pictures. The tale is, I suppose, don't run away from your responsibilities. Was this reprinted from another journal, by the way? I was just wondering how you came across a work in a foreign language.

Finally, Mick Austin gave us yet another lovely cover, even if the paint brush looked a little phallic! You really should try a cover with a gorgeous *man* on it, sometime. Of course, this may be a sales risk. . .

Lastly, when will the Silverheels album be out? And when will Dave Stevens be doing some interior art again? Oh well, I just want to be spoiled, I guess! Until next time,

Take care,
Malcolm Bourne
87 Greenfield Gardens
Cricklewood
London NW2 1HU
England

No word on Dave Stevens doing any interior art yet, Malcolm, but I've got my ears open for the slightest hint. As for the **Silverheels** *Graphic Album, with completely painted art by the amazing Scott Hampton, it's on the books for June. Watch for it!*

You're right that **The Arena** *was reprinted from the Spanish magazine,* Zona 84. *Their publisher, Toutain, regularly sends us copies of his magazines, to see if we want to use any stories he's already published. This is an easy way to get some great European work into our books without having to deal with the problems inherent with trans-Atlantic scheduling; we can get the entire project, complete. By the same token, we send them copies of our books, and they've chosen to run more than a few of our stories over there. Cultural exchange is alive and well.*

Lastly, I don't know if I would call the man on the cover to **Alien Encounters** *#11 "gorgeous," but he certainly is naked. Is that fair enough?*

Dear cat and Sean,

Yesterday, at the WinterCon, I bought the third, fifth, and tenth issues of **Alien Encounters.** I now have a complete run of all the issues so far. I think I'm better off for it.

Now, about the tenth issue.

"The Exiles" was fabulous! Sutton's art suited this story perfectly. The story is just as timely today as it was in the fifties, but today, they're regulating rock music instead of comics. One strange thing about the art, though. Is it just me, or does Poe resemble Hitler on the next-to-last page?

"Cracked Mirrors:" Mundo bizarro, man.

"Perfect Model" reminded me of a teen comedy, only a good one. This is what *Weird Science* (the movie, not the EC comic) *should* have been! Beppe is a great writer, and I'm looking forward to Cheap Shoddy Robot Toys. Gray Morrow's art was excellent, as always.

"Arena" had beautiful art and an interesting story, but for some reason it just didn't come together for me.

What would I like to see in future issues? How about more "Claustrophobia" stories by Pedro Henry (is he really Steve Moore?) and "Zoot" stories by Dave Dorman (Dave wouldn't autograph **AE** #5 unless I promised to ask)? Or how about Stevens, Macklin, and Beckum art, with scripts by Alan Moore, Doug Moench, and Mark Evanier?

Squa Tront,
Erich Mees
3456 Spalding Dr.
Dunwoody, GA 30338

Thanks for the note, Erich. As I told Malcolm, no Stevens work on line yet, however we are publishing a fabulous poster series, reproducing most of the great comic covers he's done for us over the last couple of years. Check out your local comic shop. Pedro (no comment) Henry is still writing **Laser Eraser** *for us, which now*

appears as the back-up strip in **Miracleman.** *What do ya say, Pedro? How about another "Claustrophobia" story for Erich? Dave Dorman did the cover to the issue you're holding, and we've talked about more Zoot stories. Ken Macklin is busy doing the regular* **Dr. Watchstop** *strip that appears in Fusion every two months, plus he's doing a special one-shot of his own called* **Contractors,** *coming from us in June. Nothing on tap from Chuck Beckum right now. Alan Moore is still writing* **Miracleman.** *We've got a Doug Moench story in the works, with art by none other than Jim Sullivan, which may appear in this book. And Mark Evanier is writing the monthly* **Crossfire** *series and the quarterly* **Whodunnit?** *series. It seems to me we have working for us almost everyone you want to see, but not necessarily on this book. I'll see what I can do to change that. In the meantime, be sure to check out the other projects these guys are doing.*

Dear Eclipse,

As I do once every two months, this morning I stopped by the local comic book store and purchased **Alien Encounters,** one of the approximately fifty titles (several of them Eclipse) that I read and collect. I found it, however, to be much less satisfying this time around than the first ten issues. Seeing as a letter of comment that describes your magazine disfavorably is not likely to be published unless it is backed up intelligently, I would like to explain my opinion.

The only thing I truly liked about **AE** 11 was the cover. Not only was it in contrast to the cover of **AE** 10 (we all like a little variety), but the painting has to be one of the best cover paintings I have ever seen. Unfortunately, I am not as familiar with Eclipse artists as I would like to be, and I was not able to decipher the initials on the cover. Please enlighten me as to the identity of this gifted person.

Much to my chagrin, the book went pretty much downhill from there. "A world A' Hurtin'" was unnecessarily gross, to say the least. I almost had to stop and put the comic down to regain my composure after seeing the completely unnecessary scenes on pages four and five. I realize, of course, that "For Mature Readers" is meant to discourage the squeamish, but I have never, and do not now, count myself among their number. But there is a point at which everyone finds themselves uncomfortable with graphic violence, and I think you passed it. There are much more tasteful ways of depicting such scenes, and I think you would have been better off choosing one of them. On another point, I think the closing scene, that of the Earth's destruction, could have been drawn better. Rather than an exploding planet, it looked to me like a planet with a great number of cracks, and searchlights with orange gels for added effect. Curiously enough, the drawing also gave me a feeling of deja vu, which I could not place until I ran across my copy of **Skellon Empire** #1, from Fantasy General. This comic has the dubious distinction of the only picture of the Earth blowing up (on the cover) that is worse than Peter Ledger's.

"Dave's Dilemma" had its lighter points. Who could resist the belly laugh, after all, that develops upon seeing a stereotypically lecherous Dave going "Bloop! Bloip!," and yelling "I got tits!!" But, alas, I saw it coming from the instant I knew it was a planet of women. Not that particular scenario, of course, but who in his right mind could believe that a story beginning with lonely spacemen discovering women on an unexplored planet would ever end with the same men remaining there for the rest of their fertile lives, enjoying the company of billions of beautiful, buxom broads? Especially in **Alien Encounters:** Not I. And yet, one final guffaw as Dave pleads with Ernie (who "jes act like a fag sometimes"), for one (excuse me, "jes' one"), little kiss. Cute.

From the very beginning, "Old Soldiers Fade Away" reminded me of one of my favorite *Twilight Zone* episodes, "Five Characters in Search of an Exit." I assume that either Truman once saw this episode and it remained in his brain so long that he later thought of it as a story idea, or it was meant to be similar to the episode, and the intended "tribute to" credit for Rod Serling was unintentionally omitted. Either way, a story that is blatantly unoriginal is not, in my book, a good one. I will admit, however, that I was not quite sure how the story would end, even after I learned the characters' names. "He-Thar," "Parabot," "GuyJo," and "Snuggums" were too obvious for me to notice them, if such a thing is possible.

Last, and probably not least, is "Adrift." On one hand, this is probably the best use of computer art in a comic book that I have yet seen, and I have read all of the various stages of *Shatter.* The coloring complemented it rather well, too. My only complaint is that I have absolutely no idea what the point of the story was. I usually enjoy the one-page items, but this one left me not understanding anything, much less the girl in the ? (What is it, anyway? A spaceship? A really big frog?). Once again, I would appreciate a bit of enlightenment.

I have learned in the past that it is not the act of a wise man to discontinue purchasing a title because of an off issue. So, unlike many of my contemporaries, who would probably stop collecting a title if the printing was a little light one issue, I am going to remain an **Alien Encounters** reader for the time being. Nota bene last four words.

One last comment: I don't know about the rest of your public, but I think modern science fiction has somewhat surpassed pulp, and I hope **Alien Encounters** will see fit to do so as well. Let's see more of the genuine elements of fiction, such as character development. Maybe even consider a book-length, or even multi-part story occasionally.

Sorry about the length of the letter; I know that if you do end up printing it, you will have to cut it down to size somewhat. I only hope you don't do what Marvel does, and only leave in the complimentary parts. I hate it when they do that. Don't you?

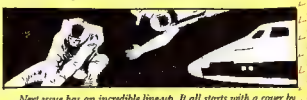
Still reading,
Jeffrey T. Anbinder
144 Southlawn Avenue
Dobbs Ferry, NY 10522

I'm sure you already noticed this, Jeffrey, but I'll let the rest of the readers know that I've run your letter complete. I firmly believe in running letters in toto, unless there are too many interesting letters for the available space. To indiscriminately cut out negative comments in a letter is a disservice to the people who buy the books, and it's their money that pays for the place I live in. This type of action also leads to lettercolumns which amount to nothing more than self-gratifying lip-service to those who assemble the page.

Your statement about not publishing unexplained negative comments is correct. "I don't like it," period, isn't worth reading any more than "I like it," period, and reading is what this page is about. I encourage every type of comment from you readers. This is the only way I can know about you think about what we publish.

Now about Tim's story, **Old Soldiers Fade Away.** *As I understand it, that story came about as Tim was playing soldiers with his son, Ben. Ben amazed Tim with the amount of believability he could put into his playing. Then when the battle was done, all the soldiers, living and dead, got up and began a new battle with the same amount of believability on Ben's part as he had with the first battle. If that kind of innocent imagination isn't a spark for a story, I don't know what is.*

The cover artist for **AE** *no. 11 is Eric Gooch. Remember, if you can't read the signature, read the indicia.*



Next issue has an incredible line-up. It all starts with a cover by Nick Cuti and is quickly followed by "The Light at the End" by Chuck (Airboy) Dixon, with painted art by Peter Ledger; "The Ideal Solution" by Ruby and Douglas Medved; "The Midget and the Eyeball" by Douglas Wheeler and Hilary Barta; and "Page One" by Ruby and Graham Nolan. Don't miss out!

Time to go. Bye!

—Sam

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